

**University of Alberta**

**Haunting Inquiry: A Linguistic Conceptual Framework for Meeting the Other in  
Classic National Film Board of Canada Documentaries and the Curriculum**

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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## Abstract

### Haunting Inquiry:

A Linguistic Conceptual Framework for Meeting the Other in Classic National Film  
Board of Canada Documentaries and the Curriculum

The NFB's mandate is "[t]o make and distribute films designed to help Canadians in all parts of Canada to understand the ways of living and the problems of Canadians in other parts."

NFB Founding Commissioner John  
Grierson

(Film Act of 1939, cited in Evans, 1991, p.  
17)

"It's only by our lack of ghosts we're haunted."

Earle Birney (1964, p. 37)

This thesis develops an approach for the curricular use of classic NFB documentaries.

The research explores hauntings in and around the films to open toward *Others* neither fully present nor absent within the Canadian imagination. They remain somewhat illicit, as is the character of haunting.

The Alberta Information and Communication Technology (Alberta Learning, 2003), English Language Arts (2000), and Social Studies (2005) curricula all call for media integration and/or media literacy development. Classic NFB documentaries are useful

media for these purposes. The films continue the tradition of John Grierson's legacy to promote a "progressive" idea of Canada. However, changing historical circumstances and a hauntingly ambivalent conservatism in the films call educators to rethink Griersonianism. Much thinking informing Media Education reveals paradox and impossibility, which *Haunting Inquiry*, as developed through Derrida's notion of hauntology (1994) and psychoanalytic views of mourning, mobilizes as learning opportunities. Haunting opens toward the elusive, indeterminate, yet hopeful Otherwise.

The thesis undertakes readings of classic NFB documentaries to explore and develop the contours, limitations, and implications of *Haunting Inquiry*. The films include: *Farewell Oak Street* (McLean, Burwash, & Glover, 1953), *Churchill's Island* (Legg, 1941), *Neighbours* (McLaren, 1952), *Paul Tomkowicz: Street Railway Switchman* (Kroiter & Daly, 1954), *Shyness* (Jackson & Daly, 1953), *Windbreaks on the Prairies* (Cherry, 1943), *Lonely Boy* (Koenig & Kroiter, 1962), *Keep Your Mouth Shut* (McLaren, 1944), *City of Gold* (Low & Koenig, 1957), and *Where is Here?* (Gunnarsson, et al., 1987).

The thesis "closes" by reflecting upon *Haunting Inquiry*'s character as a language tool or heuristic, its limitations, relevant terms, and implications for practice. As is the tendency of haunting, the thesis concludes without concluding...

## Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to all who have haunted (and continue to haunt) its writing:

My friends (Let us not forget the Magpies!), office-mates, fellow students, and the entire Department of Secondary Education—I have truly enjoyed my time here and have found an invigorating culture of recognition, innovation, and passion.

My committee (and all those who have haunted it): Terry Carson for his interest, understanding, and depth; Diane Conrad for her sincerity, support, and commitment; Michael Emme for asking hauntingly tough questions; Marg Iveson, a true teacher and treasure to her students; Carl Leggo, poet and scholar of moving spirit and inspiring generosity; George Richardson, whose deep learning and strength bring out the best in others; and Dennis Sumara for his wisdom, inspiration, and opening of many doors...

I thank Jan Jagodzinski, my teacher, supervisor, and mentor. All who know Jan know that he models a way of being an internationally respected scholar that includes being an amazing and generous human being. One of the many, many things Jan has taught me is that 5 years of Ph.D. study must include time for sushi. Jan brought me to the table, not insisting what I learn, asking only *that* I learn.

Ian Kaszuba (charter member of Tuesday Night Movie Club!)—a genuine intellectual with an outstanding bookshelf (much of which has spent the past several years on my own bookshelf)—Thank you for introducing me to *SOM*.

Judy Simpson—a brilliant friend!

D, K, J, and R—among my very closest friends...

My dad, mother, and brother—you are always with me...

And with love, Joyce Elaine Chaykoski—my partner, companion, and friend. She has supported and accepted me like no one else. I feel I have been blessed with her company all my life—from even before we met. We have both grown so much together through so many years—it is curious how we become younger than ever...

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## **Haunting Inquiry:**

### **A Linguistic Conceptual Framework for Meeting the Other in Classic National Film**

#### **Board of Canada Documentaries and the Curriculum**

#### **Introduction**

The NFB's mandate is "[t]o make and distribute films designed to help Canadians in all parts of Canada to understand the ways of living and the problems of Canadians in other parts."

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Earle Birney (1964, p. 37)

In 2004, Canadians made their nominations for the "Greatest Canadian," as a prelude to a licensed television mini-series making its way around the globe after being shown first in Great Britain and then in France and the U.S. At a time when the nation state is being significantly weakened by the growing influence of multinational corporations, international trade agreements, and military preemption, nations seem to have a tremendous desire to identify their "greatest" citizens. "The Greatest Canadian" program is a boon for educators hoping to link the media with this form of national awareness. Canadians nominated candidates, and the CBC tallied the votes and announced the top 10:

1. Tommy Douglas



2. Terry Fox
3. Pierre Trudeau
4. Sir Frederick Banting
5. David Suzuki
6. Lester Bowles Pearson
7. Don Cherry
8. Sir John A. Macdonald
9. Alexander Graham Bell
10. Wayne Gretzky (CBC, 2005)

Clearly, the above are all great Canadians, but something immediately troubles the list: are no female Canadians worthy of inclusion in the top 10? In the context of this list, women are *other*, and their otherness is peculiar, for many Canadian women could have been included. For example, Nellie McClung, Margaret Atwood, Julie Payette seem to haunt the list and be made present through their absence. They are neither present nor absent, yet also both. The series facilitates the making of a useful connection between education and media, for although hauntings trouble the series, it has curricular value. Identifying the list's omissions opens toward meeting those not included in it. I introduce my understanding of the concept *Other* later in this chapter.

The present thesis develops a linguistic conceptual framework to perform similar operations on other, arguably richer, Canadian media: classic National Film Board of

Canada documentaries, which can serve the curriculum and open toward the Other when the proposed framework informs their use. I offer a brief note on usage: throughout this text, I employ the capitalized form for "Other." This usage denotes the philosophical sense in which I use the term. Here, I refer to "Otherness" as a category rather than to specific others. "The Other" refers to the concept of Otherness instead of specific *other* people or *other* groups. The purpose of my thesis is to develop the linguistic conceptual framework that I call "Haunting Inquiry." Deconstruction and psychoanalysis inform this framework, specifically in ways these concepts provide access to notions of what Others haunt the documentaries. The classic NFB documentaries are part of Canadian culture—historical culture, political culture, linguistic culture, visual culture, and other cultures. Haunting Inquiry informs the engagement of the texts, the reading with the texts, as the creation of new linguistic texts (such as the present thesis). This framework does not deny the films' status as visual culture texts. It engages them at the horizon of generative linguistic textual production, and, therefore, its "focus" (a visual metaphor—the irony noted by the author) is primarily linguistic.

### **How I Came to the Study**

I feel and remember great sentimental and nostalgic attachment to many classic NFB films. I remember, as a child in elementary school, the days we would have films. I appreciated these occasions, because, as often as not, I would not have had my homework done. At least if we were viewing films, I would not have to explain my uncompleted assignment to the teacher walking up and down the aisles and inspecting our opened notebooks. I remember that, on one day in particular, the principal informed us we would

be going to the gymnasium for films. A friend of mine at the desk beside me started breaking up pencils and crayons into small bits. I asked him what he was doing, and he told me he wanted to have something to "chuck around" in the gym. My curricular introduction to National Film Board of Canada documentaries was, thus, not illustrious. However, I tremendously enjoyed watching the films. Many of their images have remained with me for years. They are central to my being Canadian, being a student, and being myself.

I recognize and value how these films speak to a cohesion consistent with the vision set forth by NFB founding Commissioner John Grierson (a vision that I explain and develop further in Chapter One). Althusser's (1977) Ideological State Apparatus haunts here as the films serve as official statements of Canadian ideology. Griersonian harmony permeates much of the NFB corpus. Many of the classic films depict movement from discord or potential "dissensus" toward harmony and consensus. One example is *The Newcomers* (Bennett and Daly, 1953), which documents the contributions of European immigrants following the Second World War. They bring new knowledge and practices to add to Canada's post-War prosperity: new building materials; agricultural practices; and cultural, scientific, and medical expertise. The film attempts to teach that newcomers are not to be misunderstood or feared but appreciated for adding to Canada's good fortune, wealth, and prosperity.

This account is valuable for its effort and potential to reduce xenophobia and contribute to a progressive democracy. However, curricula serving progressive democracy and genuinely concerned with diversity and justice ought to consider other accounts as well. Cohesion can disturb anyone who is an "Other." For example, the film



does not discuss Indigenous perspectives. When Indigenous peoples are presented, they are presented as a problem—a problem, which, coincidentally, newcomers bring tools to treat. For example, newcomer physicians treat Indigenous tuberculosis.

As a brief example, I read *The Newcomers* as haunting with a troubling sense of “hospitality” (Derrida, 2000). Canada appears to welcome immigrants but extracts its price. *The Newcomers* haunts with the unacknowledged ways new immigrants build Canada’s wealth. In addition to bringing capital and expertise to the country, newcomers often find themselves in exploited employment relations. Recent immigrants often work in the most monotonous and least rewarding jobs. This “contribution” to the economic order builds wealth in Canada indirectly through exploitation by employers.

### The Films

I will develop Haunting Inquiry through readings of ten classic films released between 1941 and 1987: *Farewell Oak Street* (McLean, Burwash, & Glover, 1953), *Churchill’s Island* (Legg, 1941), *Neighbours* (McLaren, 1952), *Paul Tomkowicz: Street Railway Switchman* (Kroiter & Daly, 1954), *Shyness* (Jackson & Daly, 1953), *Windbreaks on the Prairies* (Cherry, 1943), *Lonely Boy* (Koenig & Kroiter, 1962), *Keep Your Mouth Shut* (McLaren, 1944), *City of Gold* (Low & Koenig, 1957), and *Where is Here?* (Gunnarsson, et al., 1987). These films all satisfy three criteria for selection:

1. They are critically acclaimed and/or award winners.
2. They have in certain respects become forgotten and/or fallen from educational use.



3. The films draw me to them. They evoke a haunting quality and strike me as rich texts through which to develop Haunting Inquiry. They are old, some may say “dead,” yet something of them continues to return, to make a habit of haunting. Something of them refuses to stay buried.

In each chapter, I discuss briefly how the films intersect with my own history. The reasons the films are important to me differ for each. One overall idea I wish to stress, consistent with Haunting Inquiry, is that the reasons the films call to me, haunt me, are specific to my own engagement with them. In other words, I do not prescribe the films as singular or mandatory texts to support any particular aspects of curriculum or curriculum inquiry. Below, I summarize the films.

*Farewell Oak Street* (McLean, Burwash, & Glover, 1953) announces the development of Canada’s first major public housing project: Toronto’s Regent Park. The film shows nineteen people who had previously lived in one house in Toronto’s Cabbagetown before its buildings were demolished and replaced by a shining, modern development.

*Churchill’s Island* (Legg, 1941) is a World War II Allied propaganda film that paints a “stirring” wartime portrait of Britons uniting across class and gender boundaries to function as a defense/production/military organism. This film shows Britain as an island, which, of course, it is—but also as a psychological island—Churchill’s Island, defending its shores from within, against the rising tide from the continent.

*Neighbours* (McLaren, 1952) is a classic, Academy Award-winning production animating two neighbours. Each desires to have a single, errant flower on his side of his adjoining property. Eventually, the two men destroy the flower, themselves, and

everything precious to them. The film ends with the advice, in fourteen languages, to "Love your neighbour."

*Paul Tomkowicz: Street-Railway Switchman* (Kroiter & Daly, 1954) hails from the Board's innovative Studio B, which during the 1950s and 60s, produced some of the most pioneering, personal, and poetic productions within the agency. *Tomkowicz* concerns a 64-year-old Polish émigré whose work involves sweeping the rails in Winnipeg's biting winter. He ruminates upon his life back in Eastern Europe and here in Canada as well as upon how much he appreciates what he has here.

*Shyness* (Jackson & Daly, 1953) was produced for The Mental Health Division, Department of National Health and Welfare and is a sort of training or educational film for teachers and parents. The film is very much within the tradition of the Mental Hygiene movement, a 20<sup>th</sup>-century school of thought, which saw psychiatrists and psychologists using the insights of modern science to help in the development of individual children.

*Windbreaks on the Prairies* (Cherry, 1943) presents an image of modern scientific management of natural resources and the environment. At first, prairie farmers disliked trees, but eventually, soil erosion and economic hardship demanded the valuing of trees as shelterbelts and windbreaks.

Back in 1962, the NFB's innovative Studio B produced a film experimenting with *cinema verité* techniques, investigative candor, and suggestions of sociological sweep—a film called *Lonely Boy* (Koenig and Kroiter, 1962). Few Canadians younger than fifty likely have much knowledge or memory of the film's subject in the youthful peak of his

career, Paul Anka, in his time, a global youth phenomenon in his own right and, of course, Canadian.

In 1944, the National Film Board of Canada released a 2-minute film by Academy Award winner Norman McLaren about wartime silence. *Keep Your Mouth Shut* (McLaren, 1944) features a Fascist skull "congratulating" viewers for gossiping in public places about war information. Spies lurk everywhere, and "Loose-lips sink ships." A casual conversation between two women leads to a sinking. "Uncircumspect" chatter in the tavern causes a storehouse fire. A fragment of talk before someone wisely advises silence triggers a disastrous battle for Canadian forces. The film chides loose talkers, "[T]he Axis wishes to thank you for your magnificent service. Carry on gossipers and blabbers... your careless remarks kill Canadians." The film ends with its titular warning: "Keep your mouth shut!" (1944).

*City of Gold* (Low & Koenig, 1957) reminisces amongst stories of relics. The film remembers, from the apparent ghost town of "modern" Dawson City, the Gold Rush of 1897. Narrator Pierre Berton recounts that—as a child playing among the ruins of abandoned hotels, dance halls, and riverboats—he never imagined any of them meant anything. He believes, "No ghosts of the past return to haunt us, here in these silent rooms" (1957).

*Where is Here?* (Gunnarsson et al., 1987) follows the creation of *Saturday Night* magazine's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue. The film profiles a number of prominent and not-so-prominent Canadians as it pursues the quintessentially Canadian titular question. I work with a segment concerning two elderly WWII veterans' Remembrance Day struggles to keep memories alive.



## Haunting Inquiry

Haunting Inquiry benefits from five assumptions/elements:

**1. *I assume the NFB films in question possess some positive curricular aspects.***

I discuss many such aspects in Chapter One, in a short biography of John Grierson and articulation of his vision for NFB documentaries: "[T]o make and distribute films designed to help Canadians in all parts of Canada to understand the ways of living and the problems of Canadians in other parts" (Film Act of 1939, cited in Evans, 1991, p. 17). These are classic Canadian texts. Granted, they possess some problematic aspects but also many good ones. For educators to ignore the positive aspects would be to fail in their duty to include healthy democratic debate as part of their mandate to educate the young. I want to approach the films critically as well as to mobilize their rich historical, cultural, and curricular value.

**2. *Troubling aspects haunt them.*** A rigorous curriculum in a democracy has to face such troubling aspects. The elements I am concerned with are those neither wholly present (such as problematic representations) nor wholly absent (like representational exclusions). They are neither absent or present—as well as both. Hence, I do not use the language of ontology but of hauntology (Derrida, 1994). (I introduce my understanding of ontology, hauntology, and the distinction between the two below [in the present chapter].) The learners should identify and discuss a moment of the text they find haunting, disturbing. Haunting haunts us when we do not ask it to (Jaehnig, 1999). Jaehnig recounts a famous tale by Pliny the Younger, set in a haunted house:

No one will spend a night there until at last, a philosopher, intrigued by what he's heard of the house, rents it and waits for the ghost. He first hears the clank of



chains; the sound grows louder and louder, until suddenly, the ghost appears. The philosopher follows the beckoning phantom to the courtyard, where it vanishes.

The next morning, he has magistrates dig up the spot where the ghost disappeared. They find the bones of a man, shackled and chained. Once the bones are properly buried, the ghost never comes again. (1999)

In Gothic literature, a haunting is often a visitation by a ghost who tells us where the bones are buried. In this tale, the philosopher is willing to follow the ghost, but if learners do not feel particularly haunted by a film—or resist it—the pedagogue cannot force them to be so. Nonetheless, by probing an aspect of the film that may merely approximate a haunting (for example, if a student complies without really “buying into” the project), much learning and service to the curriculum can be done through individual and group examination of the film. Such a learner can still encounter the Other. For this reason, learners need to share their accounts of their hauntings.

**3. *I seek to mobilize the haunting aspects to serve the curriculum and meet the Other.*** The degree to which Haunting Inquiry links to curricular objectives influences the likelihood that educators may actually use it in the classroom. All things being equal, a curricular insight actually used is more valuable than one that will remain unread on a library shelf.

Inquiry into hauntings respects the Other. Such an inquiry does so by avoiding the limitations of an ontological view of Otherness. The inquirer regards the Other with a sense of mystery while recognizing a certain persistence to its haunting. Derrida (1995a), in *The Gift of Death*, implies that to regard the wholly Other as such and of the character of every Other is to pay its respect. Derrida asserts “*tout autre est tout autre*” (1995a)—

every other is wholly other. To regard the Other as Other and not try to contain it within the categories of the self is to respect its Otherness (this condition is a necessary but not sufficient condition for respect). However, perceiving the Other as "Other" does not mean seeing her or him as a black box beyond apprehension. Both the self and the Other share the quality of whole Otherness. I note that this quality of wholly Other-ness is not a universal quality of presence such as humanism. It is not a characteristic interior to a self, nor is it purely relational. I read it as a hauntingly Other-ness neither inside nor outside. One does not possess this Otherness. One is, in a sense, possessed by it, without granting *it* unified ontological status. A sort of mutuality exists between self and Other. To the self, then, the Other is both present and absent. I regard the Other not through sharp-edged demarcations of ontological closure, but as hauntingly both the similar and different from myself.

**4. *An important further aspect of Haunting Inquiry is for learners to reflect upon why they feel haunted (or, indeed, why they do not).*** Knowledge that does not account for the knower is incomplete and alienated. I presume a role for the knower and her or his psychic investments in knowing. How do learners read their hauntings through personal, family, community, and national history and/or character? This assumption/element opens to the value of Haunting Inquiry's psychoanalytic component.

**5. *An important final aspect of Haunting Inquiry is its un-final nature.*** The ethical and hermeneutic character of Haunting Inquiry cautions against closure. In this way, the framework differs from that of much gothic literature. In the classic story of haunting, a ghost who reveals to the haunted where the bones are buried can finally rest for eternity. When Earthly justice is restored, the haunting can subside. Even a modest

restoration of justice through any linguistic conceptual framework would be a high statement of worth for an ethically concerned researcher's work. However, I believe "justice" eludes more in real life than in gothic literature and film. In Derrida's (2002) "Force of Law," a distinction is made between *lieu* and *droit*, the Law of the Law and law itself. Here, I regard "justice" as a sort of discursive marker of directionality. It is not a fixed point or destination. Rather, it is a bearing for movement or orientation. I accept the tacit gothic proposition that a haunting calls for some restoration of justice. Does a learner find a classic NFB documentary haunted by histories of oppression, exploitation, and/or violence? Pursue the haunting. Learn of the haunting Others. Respect them. Let such learning lead to action—by all means. Pursue redress. However, I do not presume that use of this modest framework in and of itself can restore justice. I do not believe that learners will exhaust the hauntings "in" classic NFB documentaries. Hauntings are likely to continue. Therefore, the un-final final element of Haunting Inquiry is the need to remain open to hauntings ...

### **Hauntology/Ontology, the Other, and Ethics**

In the present section, I briefly introduce hauntology and ontology (and the distinctions and implications between the two), my use of "the Other," and a discussion of the ethics I use to inform this research. This thesis, its work, uses the films as a sort of "pretext" to conceptually develop Haunting Inquiry. I develop hauntology/ontology, the Other, and ethics throughout the length of the thesis and summatively revisit them in the final chapter.



### *Hauntology/Ontology*

If ontology is the study of what is (and, by implication, of the distinction between what is and what isn't), hauntology studies characteristics of ontology's elusive, spectral otherwise. Ontology refers to a classical assumption of being or existence. The concept has ancient roots in the history of Western philosophy, going back to Plato and Aristotle. I assume that ontology presumes (if ontology can be said to possess a presumptive facility) that its object or domain (being or existence) is describable or descriptively circumscribable. In this sense, the "ontological view" contends that being can be comprehensively signified. The implication for the present study is that the ontological view "believes" it can signify what is or is not in or represented in the films. Further, I assume that statements predicating this ontological epistemology organize around binaries such as being/non-being, presence/absence, and inside/outside. The first terms of these binaries are privileged: being is privileged over non-being, presence over absence, and inside over outside. One can trace this feature of binaric privileging to a presumed metaphysical centre of ontological statements. However, the content of that centre is phantomic, an impossible ideal. It is a metaphysical assumption. It is an ephemeral haunt. Therefore, I assume that the ground of ontology is not itself ontological, but hauntological.

Hauntology, then, becomes a lens through which to read the order of the spectre in ontology. "Hauntology" is a term introduced by Derrida (1994) in *Specters of Marx* that functions to spectralize the legacy and possibility of received Marxisms in an era of liberal triumphalism. The concept reads Marx beyond presumed ontology. Marxian features such as commodity characteristics and dialectical telos become modified in their



presumed determinism. Use value and exchange value become seen not necessarily as absolutely discreet qualities of presence in a commodity, and teleological history becomes less a hard prophesy than a haunting reminder of possibility. In short, hauntology recognizes the contingency, openness, and multiplicity of Marx(es).

Articulations of hauntology, though, become caught in an ontological trap. A common rhetorical strategy used against deconstruction (and, by extension, hauntology) is as follows:

i) Characterize the theory as assuming the impossibility of making determinable, ontological statements.

ii) Propose a statement of ontological character. (For example, Adolph Hitler and his legacy constitute evil.)

iii) Argue that because hauntology will not make that statement (at least with naively ontological assumptions), hauntology becomes implicated in the content of the statement.

Here, hauntology is characterized as being either not sufficiently opposed to Hitler or as providing a theoretical context in which Hitler could operate. In my view, this strategy, often wilfully, but sometimes naively, misses the point. The point is not to excuse Hitler for his vile actions and philosophy. The point is to resist the metaphysical phantoms of such a statement, which are of the same structure as is found in "America is good." The point of hauntology is not specifically to affirm or deny the particular veracity of either statement but to recognize the dangers emanating from what each statement has in common—namely, a haunting phantom of presumed ontological closure. Both statements are implicated in a system of presumably signifiable ontology. Hauntology opens to the

ever emerging otherwise of such statements. The purpose is not to deny Hitler's evil. After all, although the statement does not signify everything, it signifies something! Deconstruction is often (tactically or naively) called "relativistic" or "nihilistic." Both these ascriptions are patently impossible because they judge deconstruction by the metaphysical standards it deconstructs. This type of rhetoric, in the hands of some, becomes a crude straw man tactic bordering on scandalous. It is one thing to challenge students to consider the rigorous implications of their ideas. However, it is surprising how often this argumentation emerges in apparently serious learned discourse. Clearly, fascists exist. However, many of them are only too anxious to share their abominable views. Even among those who are not, I hypothesize that the grounding of their philosophy is entirely ontological. Their fascism is not surreptitiously discovered through the back door of a deconstructive epistemology. My sense is most fascists have no problem with the possibility of judgements of good and evil—only they feel they (the fascists) are good, and the non-fascist other is evil. (This is decidedly undeconstructive! It is simply a different inflection of ontological ethics.) Could deconstructive strategies be used to argue in favour of fascism? I suppose so. However, what philosophy cannot be contorted in that way [or, at least, cannot be implicated in terror (violence, hate, indifference to suffering...) of some form]? So, if all philosophies can be mobilized for fascism (or terror), does this make them all ethically equivalent? No. I discuss my own haunting ethics after the following subsection on the Other.

### *The Other*

Haunting Inquiry regards the Other as a sense of a returning otherwise. "The other" (Miller, 1994) suggests a variety of meanings. For Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, and others in cultural studies, "the other" is a marginalized figure caricatured for ideological justification of existing patterns of privilege. Lyotard's "differend" connotes the other as other and not subsumable within consensus building metanarratives. Mikhail Bakhtin's "dialogic" maps to "heteroglossia" as irreducible polysemy. Lacan conceptualizes the other as that which structures the discourse of the unconscious. Abraham and Torok (1994) argue that people become haunted by the unconscious of the other. Levinas conceptualizes the other as a transcendental quality leaving a trace of itself in a person's face, while Derrida (1999) reads in Levinas a model of hospitality to the other. Derrida has contended that *tout autre est tout autre*—every other is wholly other. The other becomes the radically irreducible trace of textual semantics (in all the variability of what can be seen as a "text").

I understand the Other as the haunting otherwise implicated in the conditions of the apparent. The Other is other to text and presumed meaning—and, however, not completely distinct from them. This Other is part of an irreducible field structuring the text and presumed meanings emerging from it. The Other is a haunting alternative opened by a text. It is a structuring trace, a hovering (non)absence/(non)presence. After all, consistent with the implications of hauntology, the figure of haunting cannot simply be a hidden presence or errant absence. If it were, it would be replaying and reproducing the binaristic metaphysics of what I have called "ontology." Nonetheless, the figure of



haunting returns. It whispers in the ear of interpretation as an indeterminable necessity to meaning.

The Other haunts us when we do not ask it to. Haunting Inquiry becomes less a methodology for locating the haunting Other than a linguistic framework for understanding it once it has found us. One can search for the Other but cannot be sure of what one will find. The figure of haunting finds me, and Haunting Inquiry then becomes a way of understanding this "finding."

### *Ethics*

In this thesis' readings of the films, I mobilize a haunting set of ethical assumptions. The present subsection characterizes the assumptions, which predicate upon recognizing and redressing the otherness of the Other while avoiding terror. To repeat, Derrida has written *tout autre est tout autre*—every other is wholly other. The implications of this assertion involve seeing the other as other and not trying to impose oneself upon her or him. This implication especially concerns the potential application of one's ethical categories. While not a presumably grounded ethics, neither is the dictum relativistic or nihilistic (as that would replay ontological metaphysics). Rather, the field maps to the inauguration of a novel understanding of ethics—hauntological ethics, an ethics of the spectre, an ethics of the Other.

My readings, admittedly though, manifest a certain ethical character. I make claims and take positions. However, the tenor of my ethical readings represents my own particular hauntings and not any necessary implication of Haunting Inquiry. Nonetheless, the character of the readings haunts with a certain spirit of hauntology as it has been



developed through Derrida. Reflecting empirically, looking back, I note that my readings have exhibited a certain Marxian spirit, one sensitive to economic exploitation and critical of war and scientism (not of science *per se* but of reductive fetishization of it). Ethical orientations are typically a feature of deconstructive readings. In *Spectres of Marx*, Derrida even presents a presumably "ontological" list of global problems that, in a sense, "ground" the spirit of his own analysis:

- i) Unemployment
- ii) Marginalization of the homeless
- iii) Economic war among the wealthy nations
- iv) Contradictions of interest in market economies
- v) Global debt slavery
- vi) The arms trade
- vii) Nuclear proliferation
- viii) Inter-ethnic wars "(have there ever been another kind?)" (p. 82) driven by phantasmatic assertions of nation (in all its forms)
- ix) Global organized crime ["super-efficient and properly capitalist phantom-states" (p. 83)]
- x) International legal apparatuses haunted by the philosophy of European nation-statism and unduly influenced of militarily pre-eminent states.

However, *Haunting Inquiry* proposes no universal, transportable criteria for ethical evaluation. What this denial of universal transportability loses in ammunition for forceful ethical argumentation, in its ability to marshal immediately compelling ethical claims in specific circumstances, it gains in avoiding terror. I presume that an

"ontological" grounding for ethics implicates an "ends-justifying-the-means" proposition, which leads to "justification" of terror toward the ethics' Other. The crux of my dispute with ontological ethics, in addition to the terror suffered by the Other, is the phantomic "grounding" upon which the ethics' ontology is based (as discussed above).

Therefore, my desire to avoid such phantomically "justified" terror becomes the basis of Haunting Inquiry's ethics. Some may argue that such "flexible" ethics merely support the "ethical" (ideological!) conditions needed for global Capital to flourish. I admit that this is a haunting danger. The danger has similarities, however, to ontological ethics' possibility for terror. Regardless, I do not assert necessary equivalence between all ontologically based ethics (especially statements of ethical particularity) and terror (correlated with universalist ethics). Similarly, I reject the necessary complicity of my Haunting Inquiry ethics with Global Capital. My ethics are not a universally determinable ethics. They are not a rejection of the possibility of statements of particular ethics *per se* (after all, my readings are informed by a spirit of such statements). My ethics simply recognize the indeterminability of universal ethical statements. Within the system of signification and attendant metaphysics Haunting Inquiry (and this thesis) becomes caught in, this ethical problem becomes impassable if passability is defined by the ability to establish a universal ethical criteria. This becomes the fundamental ethical aporia haunting my thesis, and, by implication, a tacit reminder of the perpetual insufficiency of ontological ethics, and, therefore, of a call for hauntological ethics, one which is not predicated upon closure but upon openness. Therefore, my thesis "concludes" (without conclusion) not with a determination, a full stop, a period, but with ellipsis ...

The thesis' exploration of hauntings in and around the films opens to *Others* not fully present within the Canadian imagination. They remain somewhat illicit, as is the character of haunting. However, neither are they fully absent. That they return to haunt speaks to their refusal to stay buried. In this sense, *Haunting Inquiry*'s mobilization of the language of haunting allows a safe way to explore potentially unsafe terrain. The thesis opens toward meeting the Other, allowing learners and their Others to meet in the realm of knowledge and cultural artifacts. Such meetings will occur as educators use the films to integrate media into the curriculum (the thesis' final chapter touches upon pedagogical implications). Thus, classic NFB documentaries serve the curriculum and open toward meeting the Other when *Haunting Inquiry* informs their use.



## Chapter One: A Great Need Exists for Haunting Inquiry

### *Media Education and the Curriculum*

Educators must integrate the media with the curriculum. In Alberta, this need exists in a number of K to 12 curricular areas including Information and Communication Technology (Alberta Learning, 2003), English Language Arts (2000), and Social Studies (2005). The Alberta Information and Communication Technology (ICT) curriculum provides a broad perspective on the nature of technology, how to use and apply a variety of technologies, and the impact of ICT on self and society. Students in Kindergarten through Grade 12 will be encouraged to grapple with the complexities, as well as the advantages and disadvantages, of technologies in our lives and workplaces. **The ICT curriculum is not intended to stand alone, but rather to be infused within core courses and programs.** (Alberta Learning, 2003, p. 1)

Although the ICT curriculum is concerned with, on the surface, technology, especially computers, media such as films, television, and popular culture are also included within ICT. In many respects, the content of students' media use is that of traditional media, but students' media are referred to as "multimedia" or "mass media in a digitized context" (p. 2). An ICT-literate student will attain competency in "[c]ommunicating, inquiring, decision making, and problem solving; [f]oundational operations, knowledge, and concepts; and [p]rocesses for productivity" (2003) to help her or him become a productive member of an economy. However, Canadians increasingly employ ICT for informational, entertainment, and recreational purposes by, for example, downloading films, television programs, and music, so that the traditional distinctions between ICT



and media become increasingly blurred. ICT-literacy now intersects with media literacy. For example, on the WWW, hundreds of classic NFB documentaries await, available for both educational and personal use. The NFB Cineroute (National Film Board of Canada, 2005a) and Documentary Lens (2005b) initiatives stream NFB content for teachers and students.

The Alberta English Language Arts (Alberta Learning, 2000) curriculum aims to enable each student to understand and appreciate language and to use it confidently and competently in a variety of situations for communication, personal satisfaction and learning:

Students become confident and competent users of all six language arts through many opportunities to listen and speak, read and write, and view and represent in a variety of combinations and relevant contexts. All the language arts are interrelated and interdependent; facility in one strengthens and supports the others. In the outcomes of the program of studies, the six language arts are integrated. (p. 2)

The language arts of viewing and representing particularly call for integration with media. The ELA curriculum regards "viewing" as "an active process of attending to and comprehending such visual media as television, advertising images, films, diagrams, symbols, photographs, videos, drama, drawings, sculpture and paintings" (p. 3) and "representing" as enabling students "to communicate information and ideas through a variety of media, such as video presentations, posters, diagrams, charts, symbols, visual art, drama, mime and models" (p. 3). In addition, the ELA curriculum uses a broad

definition of "texts" and how they are transmitted to include computers, television, radio, videos, films, and cartoons (p. 3).

The Alberta Social Studies curriculum (Alberta Learning, 2005) revolves around the core concepts of citizenship and identity and identifies general and specific outcomes. These outcomes are the strands of time, continuity and change; the land, people, and places; power, authority and decision making; economics and resources; global connections; and culture and community. To promote diversity and cohesion, the curriculum embraces Aboriginality, the Francophone language and culture, and pluralism. The curriculum also includes dimensions of thinking: critical, creative, historical, geographic, decision making and problem solving, and metacognition. Each grade level attempts to foster media literacy skills, as the following statement indicates:

Contemporary texts often involve more than one medium to communicate messages and as such, are often complex, having multi-layered meanings. Information texts include visual elements such as charts, graphs, diagrams, photographs, tables, pictures, collages and timelines. Media literacy skills involve accessing, interpreting and evaluating mass media texts such as newspapers, television, the Internet and advertising. Media literacy in social studies explores concepts in mass media texts, such as identifying key messages and multiple points of view that are being communicated, detecting bias, and examining the responsibility of citizens to respond to media texts. (Alberta Learning, 2005, p. 10)

This curriculum treats media as a vehicle for texts relevant to social studies, and media literacy skills serve this function. This perception is distinct from that of such texts as

transparent vehicles of social studies information. Media literacy becomes important in the service of citizenship and identity.

Students increasingly live in a media-saturated culture. The texts children encounter both in school and in their personal, family, social, and recreational lives increasingly include films, television, music, and other forms of digital entertainment. Children often spend as much time engaged with various forms of media as they do at school (Provenzo, 1995). These facts increase the need to integrate media and media literacy into the curriculum. ICT, ELA, and Social Studies, as well as curricula across Alberta and the country, need such integration:

Although Canada's 10 provinces and 3 territories each have their own education systems, collaboration on the development of curriculum frameworks in core subject areas—through the Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education (WCP) in the West and the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (APEF) in the East—has resulted in media education being granted official status across the country. (Media Awareness Network, 2005)

### **Classic NFB Documentaries are Useful Media to Support the Curriculum**

#### ***John Grierson's Legacy***

The NFB is an excellent resource for the integration of media into the curriculum. Traditionally, the documentaries have comprised a significant portion of the films used in Canadian pedagogical settings. The presentation of these documentaries in a variety of venues has been one of the NFB's explicit aims since the days of film agents traveling



across the country (Gray, 1973). In some respects, the documentaries have long been nearly ubiquitous media for education about Canada. They are internationally recognized as quality media, as their many international awards attest. Thus, they are significant texts in our Canadian heritage. Although many of the classic films have fallen from educational use, I seek to reintroduce them, to take advantage of their curricular richness while being aware of their problematic aspects.

To appreciate these films' inherent value to the curriculum, an understanding of the NFB's founding commissioner, John Grierson, and some of the agency's history is useful. Grierson is like a ghost at many conversations about NFB documentaries. He was born in 1898 in Scotland, and, after serving on a minesweeper in World War I and completing his Masters degree in Literature and Philosophy, he traveled to the United States on a Rockefeller scholarship. In the U.S., Grierson studied at the University of Chicago, traveled widely, and contributed articles to numerous publications.

Upon returning to England, Grierson became the founding force within the British Documentary Film Movement. At that time, Grierson oversaw film production at the Empire Marketing Board (EMB). In 1933, he and the EMB film unit transferred to the General Post Office (GPO), which Grierson left in 1937 to form the documentary co-ordinating Film Centre. Grierson remains remembered as arguably the central figure of what would become known as the "British documentary film movement." He is widely credited as being its founder and with coining the term "documentary." Grierson's documentary theory is informed by philosophical idealism (Aitken, 1998), which achieved its most systematic expression in Germany during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when, in returning to the intellectual atmosphere of the



Middle Ages, it made Germany a focal point for metaphysical and anti-materialist ideologies, and developed into 'a philosophy of contempt for empirical reality, based on the timeless and the infinite, the eternal and the absolute.' Idealism also functioned, particularly under Hegel, as an ideological support for German feudalism and, to that extent, can be considered as a conservative response to the emergence of modernity and capitalism within western Europe. However, although idealism looked back to the Middle Ages in an attempt to defend feudal social structures, it also offered a skeptical and critical response to unregulated laissez-faire capitalism, and it is here that its progressive dimension can be located. (as cited in Aitken, 1998, p. 35)

Grierson envisioned the social world as an organic whole, unified and functional in design, and his theory of documentary, informed by idealism, reflected this vision. He believed film should convey expressively and poetically a sense of the world's interdependent harmony. For Grierson, film representation functioned in a dual capacity. First, film depicted actual, empirical, or particular content. However, the crucial second aspect of his documentary theory involved editing the initial content to express its more elusive, but ultimately "truer" spirit. Film editing thus ordered the specific to convey the universal.

Some observers have argued that this philosophical idealism and Griersonian aesthetic theory suggest the ethos of National Socialism. After all, idealism developed in Prussia and promoted a premodern ideal of "national" greatness. This ideal advocates an elusive, quasi-mystical yearning for a vaguely defined sense of authenticity—principles that correlate with certain aspects of fascist thought. However, I acknowledge Sontag's

(1980) groundbreaking development of the concept of the "fascist aesthetic," which includes the characteristics of "contempt for all that is reflective, critical, and pluralistic" (p. 89). Sontag writes:

Fascist aesthetics... flow from (and justify) a preoccupation with situations of control, submissive behavior, extravagant effort, and the endurance of pain; they endorse two seemingly opposite states, egomania and servitude. The relations of domination and enslavement take the form of a characteristic pageantry: the massing of groups of people; the turning of people into things; the multiplication or replication of things; and the grouping of people/things around an all-powerful, hypnotic leader-figure or force. The fascist dramaturgy centers on the orgiastic transactions between mighty forces and their puppets, uniformly garbed and shown in ever swelling numbers. Its choreography alternates between ceaseless motion and congealed, static, 'virile' posing. Fascist art glorifies surrender, it exalts mindlessness, it glamorizes death. (p. 91)

Sontag notes that fascist art extends beyond that produced under fascist rule. Examples include Disney's *Fantasia*, the choreography of Busby Berkeley, and Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Sontag also includes the wardrobe of popular sadomasochistic representation: leather, boots, and uniforms. I do not find that such fascist aesthetics are pervasive in Grierson's idealist-informed film theory.

Admittedly, I note controversies over the fascist implications of other thinkers. For example, Friedrich Nietzsche's work has been accused of informing National Socialism and its quest to instate (or "return") the German nation to an imagined past glory. However, I read Nietzsche's *ubermensch* as prophesizing a radical individuality

that, if anything, stands against such "herd mentality." Moreover, Nietzsche famously broke with his erstwhile friend Wagner over the composer's anti-Semitism.

Martin Heidegger's connection to National Socialism is more contentious. He held membership, after all, as a member of the Party; distanced himself from his Jewish former teacher Husserl during the Nazi regime; and persistently failed to condemn the Holocaust. The connection between Heidegger's philosophy and his fascist affiliations remains a subject of debate.

Paul de Man, an influential force within the Yale school of deconstruction, was posthumously discovered to have written collaborationalist journalism in his native Belgium during WWII. The ensuing storm of debate threw into question not only de Man's reputation but also that of deconstruction. Derrida himself shared a close friendship with de Man but did not know of his Wartime writing. Regardless, I note that Derrida's own deconstructive work began to show a decided ethical focus (1989) after the de Man scandal. The de Man debate continues.

Some of Grierson's former colleagues, filmmakers, and scholars (Nelson, 1988) criticize Grierson as administratively authoritarian, "prickly," difficult, and, through his film work, implicated in the colonizing project of building a national (Canadian) ethos. Morris (1987) has suggested affinities between Grierson's ideology and aspects of neo-conservatism, which correlate with fascism; however, specifying Grierson as "fascist" is too harsh and not strictly accurate. After all, the NFB during his tenure (1939 -1945) established itself as arguably the Commonwealth's preeminent producer of anti-fascist, Wartime propaganda.



Moreover, I argue that Grierson's philosophical idealism does not have a necessary relationship to National Socialism. Rather, his philosophy strongly maps to Marxism, an expansive pole to the left of Nazism. Marx and Engels (1848/1998; 1964) took up Hegel's contribution of the dialectic and applied it to materialist historical progress. Here, Marx rejected "Absolute Spirit" in favour of "Full Communism." This move haunts the political dimension of Grierson's documentary theory toward the left. When once asked to define his political position, Grierson replied that his role is to be ever just to the left of whomever holds power (Aitken, 1998). Moreover, when he left the NFB in 1945, he did so under a cloud of whispers imputing Communist sympathy (Blais & Bairstow, 1973). Certainly, Grierson took note of the spectacle of fascist film use. He recognized the power of Riefenstahl's films (for example, 1934's *Triumph des Willens*) to propagandize a mass movement. However, "massification" as a media theory, the proposition that media coheres and creates a mass audience, was common in the 1930s. The perspective finds voice in orientations as diverse as American mass media communications research (Cantril, Gaudet, & Herzog (1940); Lazarsfeld & Stanton (1944); and Hovland, Lumsdaine, & Sheffield (1949)) and the critical theory of Adorno (1991) and Horkheimer & Adorno (2001), and these positions, in their own ways, are far, far divergent from National Socialism.

Of course, Grierson's views of film have political implications, even conservative ones, but not necessarily fascistic ones. Grierson sought to use documentaries as part of a concentrated, purposeful effort to increase social cohesion for his vision of democracy. He was influenced by certain aspects of the ideas of Walter Lippmann (1961), who perceived a fundamental contradiction between the principles of modern democracy and

the hierarchical organization of modern mass society. Lippmann *de facto* employed this contradiction to argue for abandoning the aim of egalitarianism in favour of bureaucratic rule by technical elites. Grierson was not as skeptical of democracy as Lippmann was, but, rather, believed that democratic structures could be salvaged by using public information systems (led, admittedly by cultural and intellectual elites), notably those involving documentary films (Aitken, 1998).

In 1939, Grierson received an opportunity to pursue his vision of documentary use. Canadian Prime Minister and former Rockefeller foundation official (Nelson, 1988) Mackenzie King invited Grierson to Canada in 1939 to head up a new, centralized film production agency, the National Film Board of Canada. Grierson envisioned the fledgling bureau as the "eyes of Canada" and wanted to ensure that "through a national use of cinema, [this bureau would] see Canada and see it whole: its people and its purpose" (National Film Board of Canada, 2003). Grierson drafted the original Film Act of 1939, which stated that the NFB's purpose was "to make and distribute films designed to help Canadians in all parts of Canada to understand the ways of living and the problems of Canadians in other parts" (as cited in Evans, 1991, p. 17). In 1950, the updated National Film Act added that the NFB should operate "in the national interest" (as cited in Evans, p. xiii). The Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, more commonly known as the Massey Commission, delivered its recommendations in 1951 and provided a sense of renewal for the burgeoning film agency (Evans, 1991).

### *Rethinking Grierson's Legacy*

Classic NFB documentaries continue to haunt the Canadian imagination. They remain a rich source of *official statements* of Canada. Today, the NFB spearheads a number of initiatives to reacquaint educators with its catalogue, especially its classic and archival titles. These appeals to history suggest nostalgia for "simpler" times when Canadian identity may have seemed "easier." The classic NFB titles suggest ambivalence about conservative and progressive possibility. Both aspects haunt the films. For this reason, curricular use of the films needs to be rethought. The following section briefly discusses some reasons by referring to films from the NFB catalogue. Many of the films reflect their contexts of production in ways that seem problematic from contemporary perspectives. For example, *Windbreaks on the Prairies* (Cherry, 1943) illustrates how trees are represented and how scientific change influences their representations. The film opens with a managerial reading of nature, an ideological "ecologism," which, despite the film's claim to the contrary, perpetuates environmental, economic, and human distress. Despite the government's tree program's purported grounding in employing modern scientific management to improve life, the film's outlook is actually ecologically harmful.

A rethinking of the theme of Griersonian harmony is also due. *Paul Tomkowicz: Street-Railway Switchman* (Kroiter & Daly, 1954) presents a man's professions of gratefulness for his sense of well being in the optimistic early days of Canada's post-War "social-safety-netted" society. However, the "restructuring," "reformulating," "reinventing," or neoliberal scaling back of the traditional programs originally established in the public interest in the last 25 to 30 years has transformed the object of



Tomkowicz' appreciation. Moreover, the context of reading *Tomkowicz* in 2006 has changed significantly since the film's 1954 year of production. These differences of context and time accentuate the haunting Otherness in the Griersonian harmony of both the film and the liberal welfare state to which it speaks. The haunting's persistence calls for attention.

The films also need to be rethought to reconceive of *Others* open-endedly. Classic documentary representations can be respectful yet limiting; they can simultaneously assert and erase identity. *High Steel* (Biggs & Owen, 1965) is a profile of a Mohawk man who works as an ironworker, building skyscrapers in New York City. The film cuts back and forth between New York and the idyllically represented Kahnawake Reserve in Quebec, ignoring the structural conflict in Canadian/First Nations relations. The narrator comes from a reserve, built by Canada, and, in turn, builds the White Man's world of skyscrapers. The film functions to erase Aboriginality and normalize capitalist labour relations. The narrator provides a history of ironworkers from Kahnawake, tracing them back to a tragic 1907 bridge collapse, which killed "almost the entire wage-earning population of Kahnawake at the time" (Biggs & Owen, 1965) and follows up with his own biography upon the beams.

In the 1600's, Mohawk people lived in the "Mohawk Valley" of New York State (Lilly of the Mohawks, 2003). The village named Ossernenon (on the present-day site of Auriesville N.Y.) suffered a smallpox epidemic, moved, and was renamed Kahnawake. Shortly thereafter, the village moved again to the northern shore of the Mohawk River. Around 1668, many Mohawks traveled to Laprairie on the St. Lawrence River. Many of them had converted to Christianity and sought to join Jesuit missions there. However,

many others still followed their traditional ways. Therefore, some Christians encouraged the people to move further north, where more practicing adherents lived. Kentake was the name of the new Mohawk village. The village moved four more times and was renamed as Kahnawake, Kahnawakon, Kahnatawenke, and ultimately Kahnawake again. The Mohawk people have been in Kahnawake since 1719.

Kahnawake Mohawks are members of the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy, or in the Kanienke'haka language, the *Haudenosaunee* ("People of the Longhouse") (Mohawk Council of Kahnawake, 2003). The French signed treaties with the Haudenosaunee in 1667 and 1700, leading to military and political alliances and Christian missions in Mohawk territory. Kahnawake men began ironwork in the 1860's, building bridges, ships, and skyscrapers. In the summer of 1990, people from Kahnawake as well as Akwesasne joined and supported the Mohawks of Kanesatake during the Oka siege, in addition to setting up roadblocks on their own reserves (CBC, 1999).

An implied theme of *High Steel* is that the Mohawks are hard workers who respect traditional ways, but accept the costs and the role they must play in building a modern world. The opening scenes depict the teamwork and harmony of men and machine as they use a bell to coordinate derrick work between men many stories apart. Traditional markers of Mohawk identity are scarce, as the men look much like any other construction workers in New York City at the time. The narrator takes pride in his job and reminisces about home. He comments that people "say Indians have a special knack for high jobs," and adds, "I don't know. I guess a man takes the best thing that comes his way" (Biggs and Owen, 1965). Thus, the narrator evades (admittedly problematic) essentialist claims but valorizes capitalist economics. On whether Mohawks are

different, he provides a similar reply, "Not that we're different from other people. I mean, everybody eats Corn Flakes, so we gotta eat Corn Flakes" (1965).

In all examples, the macro subordinates the micro. He notes that when the Mohawks died on the bridge in 1907, "Everybody thought that would be the end of the Mohawk ironworkers, but it was just the beginning." Later, he comments, "[We] gotta get this building up" (1965). To help the students see the past limiting representations, a conceptual framework needs to be developed before a film such as *High Steel* and the other briefly mentioned films should be used in the curriculum. *High Steel* has much to recommend it, but still has problems and exclusions. Such a framework would honour respectful representation while remaining open to further possibilities.



## Chapter Two: Much Thinking Informing Media Education Reveals Paradox and Impossibility

### Media Literacy/Media Education Perspectives

Numerous, often conflicting, definitions of "media literacy" exist.

I offer a partial list of five preliminary definitions:

1. The ability to analyze, evaluate, and effectively communicate information in a variety of media (print, graphic, video, etc.) (Anonymous, n.d.).
2. Being able to understand that media messages, e.g., from the TV, radio, papers or Internet, are often designed to influence us. The continued growth of communications media makes media literacy a crucial aspect of literacy for everyone (Department of Education and Children's Services, 2004).
3. The ability to read, analyze, evaluate and produce communication in a variety of media forms (television, print, radio, computers, etc.) (PBS, 2000).
4. The ability to effectively and efficiently comprehend and utilize mass communication (McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2002).
5. Media literacy is an attempt to EXPAND the traditional view of literacy, not to replace it (Media Literacy Online Project, n.d.).

*Indeed, "media literacy" and "media education" can mean a variety of different things. "Media literacy" often suggests a sense of inoculation, which can be against violent or sexual content as well as ideology. "Media education" suggests a sense of learners not needing to be afraid of media. Learners' enjoyment of media is also often considered. I also think of media education as considering media as an educational*

*resource—a resource, coincidentally, which serves to promote media literacy. Indeed, I use both terms. I tend to use “media literacy” strategically to appeal to Social Psychology and conservative audiences, where the term tends to have greater currency. Generally, however, I consider “media education” to be the more inclusive term. I regard it as including, variously, senses of inoculation, pleasure, and resource. This thesis uses both terms.*

Street (1984) distinguishes two general conceptions of “literacy.” He considers “autonomous” literacy as institutionally free, independent, and implying a single literacy for all people. He considers “ideological” literacy as socially and institutionally embedded, a dependent variable permitting multiple, plural literacies.

Writers “operationalize” media literacy in a variety of ways. Postman and Powers (1992) examine television news and call for conscious intervention. Silverblatt (1995) and Potter (1998) offer comprehensive approaches to developing media literacy. O’Sullivan and Jewkes (1997) offer perspectives upon media studies, cultural studies, and media education rooted in a critical framework. McKie and Singer (2001) present a modernist perspective considering social science as a framework, journalism as a profession, and public policy as a concern.

Ample research has examined the workings of the media as an aspect of media literacy. Lee and Solomon (1992) assert that powerful business and corporate interests own much of the media and thereby exert a palpable influence on news coverage and editorial decisions. (I note that professionals in the news industry vociferously defend

their integrity and assert what they believe is their autonomy from commercial interests.) Rushkoff (1999) discusses manipulation in the media.

Some commentators explore media content. Dyson (2000) takes an arguably culturally conservative, if feminist position against media violence when addressing the largely rejected recommendations of Canada's 1977 LaMarsh Report into violence in the media. I personally have undertaken an exploration of the ideological character of educational depictions in Hollywood films (Nellis, 2001). Pinsky (2001) furnishes a theological reading of *The Simpsons*. A number of general Media Education resources are available. Some deal with teaching popular culture (Worsnop, 1994; Worsnop & Leitenberg, 1994; and Worsnop, 1999). Davis (1995) has written an encyclopedic, historical resource of children's television programs, and Wallace (1998) offers a fine resource for teaching children about television.

A significant amount of research deals with the social effects of media. Much of this literature uses a critical-realist epistemology to identify questionable structures and trends in relationships among media, knowledge, culture, and politics. Postman (1985) discusses television's unfavorable implications for intellectual rigor and democracy. Provenzo (1995) pegs children's weekly TV viewing time at about 28 hours per week. According to Gabler (1998), America has cast itself as a "Republic of Entertainment," a mythic-narrative lens through which it subsequently views itself and the world. Lasn (1999) examines the undemocratic nature of consumerism and its negative impacts on the environment. For Chomsky (2002), the media have made uncomfortable aspects of democracy invisible and presented a pat, banal version, or a false, paternalistic picture of democracy. Hiné (2000) suggests that teenagers, like the poor, have always been with us.



However, in the past, "teenager" has meant different things as those bearing that signifier have performed different roles—helping on the farm, being abandoned in cities, and working in industry. Ultimately, teenagers comprise a major component of culture and the economy and, arguably, have a symbiotic relationship with the media. Schlosser (2002) provides an exploration of fast-food marketing aimed at children through the media and schools.

In addition, long-standing debates about television continue. Mander (1978) presents a very critical account. Winn (1985) argues that television is bad for children and dulls their capacities, but Bianculli (1992) defends the medium.

The Ontario Media Arts curriculum has established five crucial and seminal principles for Canadian media education and media literacy:

- i) All media are constructions.
- ii) The media construct reality.
- iii) Audiences negotiate meaning in media.
- iv) Media have commercial implications.
- v) Media contain ideological and value messages.

(Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1989, pp. 8-9)

Together, the definitions, studies, and 5 principles have different implications resulting in paradoxical visions of media education. These paradoxes form impasses between the various positions. Moreover, the irresolvable aspects of media education continue to fuel debate. I argue in Chapter Three of this thesis that this irresolvability uniquely benefits from an approach informed by the work of philosopher Jacques Derrida and psychoanalysis. *In the present chapter, I lay out 10 of the themes of media literacy*

*thought and explain how they are paradoxical. To situate Haunting Inquiry, I present the themes to review, draw together, and synthesize the diverse range of literature relevant to media education. The list of themes is by no means exhaustive. It traces the importance and some of the permutations of "ideology" to media education. The themes relate to each other as points in the development of how the literature treats ideology. I do not perceive the paradoxes I identify in the themes as fatal to the positions but, rather, as evidence of their complexity. My purpose is to point out the paradoxes to demonstrate the aporetic nature of media education thought and to show the need for Haunting Inquiry, which directly acknowledges paradox. I speak to Haunting Inquiry's capacity to do so in Chapter Three. Presently, I identify each of the 10 themes as representing positions in media education discourse. By presenting the themes in this way, I emphasize that they seem variously unsatisfactory and contradictory. Indeed, I do not argue for the necessary privileging of one of the themes over the others. I ultimately favour the position I present in Chapter Three.*

**Theme One from the Literature: The media have a "reality" beyond their mere appearance**

Whatever media may appear to be, their fundamental character is different. They may seem to provide harmless entertainment, but they are also assumed to offer something different: harmful sexual or violent content or manipulative marketing. Alfred North Whitehead said that the history of Western philosophy is a footnote to Plato. I trace the source of this first theme back to this Greek thinker. In his *Republic*, Socrates describes the Platonic discrepancy between appearance and reality (Osborne, 1992). The

allegory of the cave begins with people shackled in a cavern. Their vision (and assumption of reality) is obscured so that they can see only images cast upon the wall, but they assume these mere appearances are "reality." At one point, a man escapes and makes his way blindly from the darkened depths into the light above. In the sunlight, this person comes to apprehend reality, a reality strange and rendered seemingly stranger by his confusion as he reenters the cave where other cave dwellers scoff at his account of his experience (Plato, 1955).

Plotinus (1964) extended aspects of Platonism and introduced a triadic structure that influenced the future development of Western thought. The "Three Primal Hypostases" include the Soul, the Nous or Spirit, and the One. The Soul refers to the human soul and is distinct from the body. The Soul contemplates the Nous or Spirit, an intermediary formation between the Soul and the One. The Nous is an image of the One, which it, in turn, looks up toward. The One functions as "God." It is purely abstract.

Early Christian doctrine absorbed Plotinus' kind of neo-Platonic synthesis (Osborne, 1992), developing its own Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Plotinian Hypostases and Christian concepts are roughly analogous:





| Plotinian Hypostases                                                                    | Concepts from Christian doctrine                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The One—Purely abstract source of power                                                 | God—omnipotent source of creation                                                    |
| Nous or Spirit—intermediary formation between the Soul and the One, an image of the One | Christ as corporeal manifestation of God; present throughout creation as Holy Spirit |
| Soul—the human soul, distinct from the body                                             | Transcendent human soul, distinct from body                                          |

The roots of this appearance/reality distinction spread deeply in Western thought, yet something troubles it. Platonic Reality is, as unadulterated Form, an unlimitable Truth beyond the contingency of specificity. The Truth of the world is as too true for any complete manifestation or representation in the world. True reality cannot exist in any manifest form, which, by definition, would be limited. The ultimate reality that grounds truth cannot be seen, heard, touched, tasted, smelled, articulated, or known as such. The reality that inspires the quest for true knowledge can never be known. It is, by definition, an unattainable Ideal.

Baudrillard (1994) reworks the appearance/reality distinction. I discuss Baudrillard's position in more detail in other themes to follow, but he rethinks the relationships between representation, appearance, and reality. Here, representation no longer simply refers to some original model. People live in a "hyperreal" world in which representation represents other representation. Appearance *becomes* reality—not a particularized copy of an ideal reality. Appearance does not imitate reality. Appearance *is*

the reality. Here, a representation replaces the original in an unfolding economy of new copies copying existing copies until all frames of reference become based upon such appearances.

In "Plato and the Simulacrum," Deleuze (1983) articulates a position distinct from Baudrillard's account. The Baudrillardian simulacrum might be said to invoke a failure of classical representation in that perception misplaces the model (the referent being absent). In Deleuze's account, the copy not only loses track of its ontological origin (with the referent being still present) but wages a war of usurpation against the model. The copy seeks to overturn the order of appearance/reality and replace the model with itself.

The presumption of a timeless reality grounding the purported truth of representation, however, remains a trenchant metaphysical assertion. An example of such an assertion grounds public pronouncements defending the Bush administration's so-called "War on Terror" in terms of an ethical absolute ("Bush: bin Laden," 2001). Such an assertion of absolute value must ultimately trace to some grounding principle, some external truth to signification mooring the statement's veracity. God, the Bible, the *Quran*, common sense, and the authority of empirical science are examples of such grounding principles. Such principles, no matter their specific articulation, depend upon a metaphysical transcendence, something extra to the analysis. The principles depend upon the assertion of a grounding value to halt the otherwise endless slippage and sliding of signification. Ironically, contradictorily, paradoxically, aporetically—the forgoing sentence itself is no exception. Its assertion seems to be ultimately based upon a principle of assertability, which *functions* as a metaphysical transcendence. However, I do not read the contradiction as a failure of some (metaphysical) standard of coherence, some

demand that indecideability be somehow decided. Rather, the mobilization of contradiction becomes the starting place for opening toward and recognizing such a statement's haunting otherwise(s). I do not read deconstruction as presuming that texts can escape metaphysics. My purpose is to recognize that comprehensive determination of metaphysics, or the conclusive deciding of undecideability as impossible and that policies based upon such claims to truth are not self-apparently justified. *Haunting Inquiry* provides a framework to read media texts with an appreciation of this insight.

**Theme Two from the Literature: The quest for "true" knowledge of the media's reality ties intimately to narratives of progress**

Here, the theme presumes that if students can attain media literacy and its function of accurately discerning reality from appearance, society will improve. If students can read media, recognizing their representations as mere appearance, then a worthy accomplishment would be gained. This principle links to a *perennialist* philosophy of education which champions the teaching to students of timeless truths. Examples of thinkers promoting such a philosophy include Mortimer Adler (Adler & The Paideia Group, 1984) and Robert Hutchins (1954). I read these "timeless truths" through a filter of historicity. I understand them as assertions of timelessness from within time-situated specificity. This move returns to the problem (from Theme One) of attempting to understand the timeless from within time. A significant tradition of thought (I do not ultimately accept) informing media education recognizes this problem and proposes a unique solution.



G.W.F. Hegel strongly influenced John Grierson in his attempts to demonstrate that thought is intertwined with historical progression moving through logical theses, antitheses, and syntheses of Logic, Nature, and Spirit toward a grand synthesis, the Absolute Idea. The "Absolute Idea" (Osborne, 1992) refers to the total, conscious integration of thought with the world, the recognition of absolute unity. Here, humankind's thinking is said to develop through time moving through permutations of specificity, at each stage, understanding a progressively more complete picture. Eventually, human understanding would become all-encompassing, a synthesis of all previous epochs of understanding. The anticipation of a final synthesis functions as an imagined end of history. This view of history as a coherent, teleological trajectory is a powerful account with complimentary conceptions throughout traditions associated with the West. Such a movement toward a grand synthesis is analogous to the Judeo-Christian perception of history and Messianic prophecy. The coming of the Messiah (or for Christians, the return) serves as an end to history, the culmination of historical progress.

In *The End of History and the Last Man*, Francis Fukuyama (1993) characterizes post-Cold War liberal democracy as such a conclusion of history. The proliferation of liberal democratic States (and the discrediting of alternatives), a Hegelian dialectical logic of history leading toward all-encompassing synthesis, and the assertion of the necessity of some level of market-orientation leads him to his thesis.

In large measure, a reading of Fukuyama informs Derrida's (1994) project in *Specters of Marx*. In the first instance, Derrida admits that Fukuyama's book is not nearly as *bad* as many detractors desperately claim it to be. Derrida characterizes the work as a neo-Evangelical calling for the Promised Land. However, for Derrida, Fukuyama's "Last

Man" labours through contradictory impulses. First, Fukuyama recognizes the tragedies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: the legacies of Stalin, the Holocaust, Pol Pot, and many others. However, these events become characterized as empirical exigencies—glitches—in the otherwise forward-moving progress of the great synthesis. In order to read these anomalies "properly," one requires access to a sense of the ideal spirit of history—that which history itself would only impurify with particularities. So, Fukuyama's Gospel-like proclamation depends upon the presumptive confluence of the contradictory impulses of historically particular anomaly and ideally pure synthetic progression. Of course, the admittedly Hegelian tenor of Fukuyama's analysis can bear such apparent contradiction in which empirical anomaly and the thrust of ideal progress combine in a more perfect dialectical synthesis that neither of the positions alone can muster. *The End of History* becomes a neo-liberal lyric set to the tune of Hegelian dialectics. Derrida seems to hear the song, but perhaps to the strains of Bach's "Tocatta and Fugue in D Minor"—a haunting music. Perhaps he also hears it with the lyric of a returning Marx: not a necessarily ontological, determinable, or teleological Marx—not a necessary Marx at all. Derrida hears it with the ear of a certain Marx: a certain uncertain Marx that ever returns to and from Fukuyama's call for the Promised Land (remaining more promised than landed).

### **Theme Three from the Literature: Debates exist about the nature of progress**

"Progress" may be seen as students attaining the media-literacy-oriented skills of good citizenship. Such students would become self-possessed individuals and members of an active, pluralistic, liberal democracy. However, other perspectives regard the media

as leading, at least in the immediate future, away from genuine democracy. This section addresses literature that debates the value of progress for capitalist economic ends at the expense of progress for social ends.

I begin with a brief, general overview of Marx, who generally addresses exploitation (Osborne, 1992). His philosophy involves an overturning of Hegel's ideal dialectic into a view of material relations driven through history by conflict. He argues that the first historical stage was primitive communism, in which people lived communally prior to the advent of surplus wealth. Next, came a period of slavery, in which human beings themselves were cast as wealth and property. After slavery, came feudalism. Serfs worked the lands of the landed aristocracy. Our current epoch is one of capitalism, whereby workers sell their labour to the owners of capital. Marx believes that the inner contradictions of capitalism will eventually lead to its collapse into the final historical epoch, Full Communism. Marx's debt here to Hegel may be seen in Full Communism's analogy to the Absolute Idea cast in materialist terms.

As the above sketch illustrates, people are divided into those who own property and those who do not. This division is the root of Marx's class antagonism. In capitalism, the proletariat sells its labour to the bourgeoisie, those who own the means of production—in Marx's 19<sup>th</sup> century, factories. The workers are not paid for the true value of their work, but receive, rather, only a subsistence wage, just enough to survive and to produce subsequent generations of workers. The employers extract and keep the surplus value of the workers' labour. Thereby, the bourgeoisie exploits the proletariat.

In *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx (1964) envisions human existence in capitalism in terms of alienation. As he indicates, the world divides into



those who own property and those who do not. In this situation, the material value in the world increases, while the value of human beings decreases. Workers become strangers to the products of their labour and the means of life. Living on only subsistence wages, workers lack freedom. The system of private property is the root cause of this condition, and workers exist in a kind of alienated slavery.

"Globalization" as a form of international capitalism involves the expansion of the system of private property. In 1848, Marx and Engels (1998) called for the workers of the world to *unite*, to realize their mutual interests across national borders. Currently, however, not the workers, but the Capitalists, the owners and controllers of private property, seem to have heeded Marx and Engels' call. For example, the proliferation of international trade agreements/alliances such as NAFTA and the EU precisely undermine aspects of self-determining authority for member states (and their workers).

Globalization, in this sense, becomes the uniting of *Capital*. Hardt and Negri (2000) have argued somewhat similarly (calling the process "Empire"). Psychoanalysis helps to show what Marx had not developed more fully within his notion of fetish commodification. National identity becomes a fantasy formation, which has proven to be stronger than class. Classic NFB documentaries have predominantly promoted Canadian national allegiance rather than class imaginary. The films explicitly figure "nation" over class (for example) as the predominant identification category. The agency, after all, is named the "National Film Board of *Canada*."

Marx (1992) also discusses the difference between "use value" and "exchange value" in his theory of commodity fetishization. The commodity functions as a "fetish" by wearing a metaphorical mask hiding its "true" nature. The mask allows observers to

see the commodity primarily in terms of its use value. For example, a car is for transportation, and a television set is for entertainment. What is masked, however, is the commodity's exchange value—the labour that went into it and, especially, the exploited labour that went into it because of the surplus value extracted from the labour and kept from the workers. Economically, international Capital with the selling of fantasy rather than use value and commodities surpasses this situation. Here, surplus is no longer determined by labour hours alone. In Chapter Three, I further discuss advances in Marxian thinking through an engagement with psychoanalysis in the work of Žižek (1989; 1993; 1997; 1999).

Jean Baudrillard (1975) introduces a critique of fetishization. He argues that reification of labour power in the use value/exchange value nexus ultimately reinforces bourgeois political economy rather than overturns it. Here, Marx's reading, by still privileging labour power as the primary category of analysis, ensures the meta-analytic pre-eminence of bourgeois production economics. For Baudrillard, Marx does not smash production; he rather presents its mirror alternative. I appreciate thinking of labour power and use/exchange values as quasi-phantomic metaphysical assertions that leave *something* important hauntingly unacknowledged. However, *Haunting Inquiry* does not, because of this appreciation, presume to dispatch Marx to the dustbin (historical or otherwise [to say nothing of the futility of such an act upon a figure so propensitous to return]). After *Specters of Marx* (1994), I do not read Marx's legacy as necessarily and sufficiently being found in the ontological specificities of his analysis but, rather, in the hauntological spirit of that analysis' troubling spectral legacy. I *spectate* Baudrillard's analysis as a mirror itself. Baudrillard critiques Marx for mirroring bourgeois political

economy and missing its meta-analytical pre-eminence. However, I read Baudrillard's analysis as also indirectly reinforcing political economy for his eschewal of its most trenchant critic. Baudrillard mirrors liberal critique through his advancing of labour power analysis as fiction. His critique of Marx in order to critique political economy mirrors the interests of political economy.

Media are a global commodity. However, in contrast to how Marx would have perceived their commodification as representing dubious progress, some see their commodification as a positive sign of progress (Hoskins and McFadyen, 1996). Such literature is strongly market-oriented and provides a foreground to the development of my own critical frame to analyze the films. Writers within the business community detail patterns in the international trade of cultural products such as television programs and movies. Hoskins, McFadyen, and Finn (2004) look at the pricing of international trade in television programming, arguing that different markets have different pricing models. Pricing models include Personalized, Dealing Block, Group, Two-Part Tariff, Bundling, Cream-Skimming, Penetration, and Product Systems. Many of these models are predicated upon second-copy discounts, so that subsequent copies of programs are significantly less expensive to produce than the first. Attallah (1996) argues that Canada is becoming more and more of a television exporter. Magder (1996) details how core companies such as Alliance Atlantis have created niches for themselves because of a combination of public policy initiatives like Canadian content restrictions, production funding and tax credits, as well as market conditions like an historically low Canadian dollar compared to U.S. currency.



Other writers chronicle disturbing changes in postmodern, global times. Hughes (1993) takes aim at the contradictions in both the left and right positions of the late 1980s and early 90s culture wars, including those involving "political correctness," multiculturalism, post-structural re-centering, art as a site for political struggle, and art as therapy. Ralston Saul (1997) argues that Canada must nurture the positive nationalism of community building, a humanist movement seeking continual reform to improve the life of the community, and forego the negative nationalism of thrown-together circumstance, which is typically defined in and by crisis. Chomsky (2000) contends that, today, the truth is not permitted to reach people. Ahmad (2001) indicates that the U.S. must recognize its culpability in sowing the seeds of terrorism against itself by condoning terrorism by its allies and supporting repressive regimes. Ahmad made this claim in the late 1990s, before 9/11. Klein (2002) presents a collection of previous writings explaining how corporations and governments put up fences that block democratic interests. However, Klein suggests that windows emerge through which a diverse group of people can see the possibility of a new, yet unarticulated, possibility beyond corporate globalization. McMurtry (2002) distinguishes between the "global market" and the "life economy." The former quashes the latter and mutes the possibility of opposition through an unseen moral syntax.

Snow (2002) argues that, in post-Cold-War times, the United States Information Agency (USIA) has become an organ for advancing foreign-policy initiatives and corporate interests under the guise of expanding markets. Snow is a former USIA staff member. The expansion of markets is ostensibly pursued for its own inherent virtues, but, in fact, improves conditions for U.S. corporate and business interests. The USIA presents

a narrow conception of the U.S. Good packaged as a global Good. Snow questions the narrow vision of market utility, not as a writer opposed to capitalism, but as a writer opposed to capitalist abuses.

While Baudrillard (1975), Foucault (as referenced in Hall, 1997, p. 43), and Lyotard (1993), critique Marx and his philosophical assumptions, a significant tradition of recent scholarship often called "post-Marxism" has emerged. This literature seeks to retain a broad Marxian vision while modifying classical assumptions with insights from postmodern and poststructural scholarship. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) characterize critical action as more broadly based than 19<sup>th</sup> century class analysis, political parties, and trade unions. They also modify Gramscian hegemony. In addition, Andre Gorz (1982) argues that the working class in its 19<sup>th</sup> century form no longer exists. Moreover, Derrida's (1994) attempt to reclaim a hauntological spirit of Marx while distancing analysis from what he reads as Marx's ontological failings also falls within the purview of "post-Marxism." Zizek (1989) adds a dimension of psychoanalytic desire to explain the persistence of capitalistic categories and ideology in an increasingly changing world. Post-Marxist positions generally tend to dissatisfy Marxists of a more classical or "realist" persuasion. Regardless, Haunting Inquiry, as a position informed by Derrida (1994), welcomes openness toward other Marxisms. (While Marx famously asserted [attributed by Engels (1890) in a letter to Conrad Schmidt] that he is not a Marxist, I want to read Derrida as not a post-Marxist). Indeed, multiple interpretations of "progress" (such as those discussed in the present section) co-exist, but they are all hermeneutic claims. Compelling arguments support numerous different interpretations, and closure of

the debates seems improbable if not impossible. *Haunting Inquiry* operates modestly in the space of such irresolvability.

Debates between so-called classical Marxists and post-Marxists remain a contested field within critical theory. I do not presume to reduce or reify the positions, but, rather, to mark some of the debate's terrain. I acknowledge that from a certain point of view, post-Marxism, at best, dilutes the realist force of classical positions. At worst, it becomes an ideological co-optation by Capital. Similarly, I appreciate the argument that "the classical Marxian position" is a fiction of orthodoxy read onto a text ideally against orthodoxy (if *Specters of Marx* teaches me anything it is that there is no singular "classical Marxian position"). In addition, I recognize the value of claims that such "classical Marxisms" reinforce views of ontology and telos predicated upon a phantomic metaphysics. Moreover, phantomic or not, such metaphysics have often functioned as justifications for terror in the name of presumably transcendental ends. A rationale of ends-justifying-the-means predicated upon a phantomically metaphysical ground is too elusive of a foundation upon which to base violence for radical social change. (Indeed, I know of no such foundation.)

*Haunting Inquiry* is not one or the other—classical Marxist or post-Marxist. *Haunting Inquiry* proceeds haunted by a certain spirit of Marx (and a certain spirit of a post-Marx) and of indignation over global exploitation and violence and of dissatisfaction with the persistent failures of liberal, market-oriented solutions. In this sense, *Haunting Inquiry* haunts with aspects of both positions but resists ascription as necessarily either one. Many questions for curricular uses of Marx concern the implication of "the curricular Marx" for social action. Marx used as a heuristic for curriculum analysis is



often held to the same ethical standard as Marx used to justify programs of violent revolution. I make a distinction between the two uses. Marx used as a heuristic for curriculum analysis mobilizes an awareness of the complexities of ideology and ideological reproduction in curricular contexts. I do not argue for violence of any kind and reject that doing so is somehow a default (hegemonic) implication of using Marx. In fact, if *Specters of Marx* and hauntology teach me anything, it is that unitary, hegemonic Marxisms are to be resisted. Haunting Inquiry mobilizes an ideology-focused Marx for curriculum analysis. This mobilization does not demand a necessary telos and is not a failure of some true and correct use of Marx but, rather, a strategic use of a haunting spectre of Marx.

#### **Theme Four from the Literature: Media are a vehicle for ideology**

In a media-saturated world where children increasingly spend more time watching television; attending movies; surfing the Internet; gaming; reading magazines; and viewing advertising, fashions, and popular culture, media are seen as a powerfully pervasive vehicle for transmitting ideology. Below, I briefly expand upon some perspectives concerning how this transmission happens. Marchak (1988) defines "ideology" as "[s]hared ideas, perceptions, values, and beliefs through which members of a society interpret history and contemporary social events and which shape their expectations and wishes for the future" (p. 3). Marchak discusses a variety of ideological positions including socialism, classical/neoliberalism, contemporary liberalism, classical conservatism, and neo-conservatism. The term "ideology" itself was originally coined by Destutt de Tracy as a "science of ideas" (Kennedy, 1979). De Tracy was influenced by

Étienne Bonnot de Condillac's sensualist focus upon John Locke. However, the term became denigrated as metaphysics by Napoleon and others in post-Revolutionary intellectual circles before Marx influentially inflected it as the basis of bourgeois illusion (1979).

Marx's view of ideology extends his concept of the "false consciousness" inherent in fetishization. Marx wrote in *The German Ideology*:

The ideas of the ruling class are, in every age, the ruling ideas: i. e. the class which is the dominant *material* force in society is at the same time the dominant *intellectual* force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that in consequence the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are, in general, subject to it.... [The] individuals composing the ruling class...rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age. Consequently, their ideas are the ruling ideas of the age. (as cited in Strinati, 1995, p. 131)

Media are a vehicle for the transmission of ideas. Moreover, media are implicated in patterns of material production control: they are owned. Therefore, the argument proceeds that the ideas that media transmit support such patterns of ownership, and the media become a vehicle for ideology.

Various perspectives in media education address ideology and render the "classical Marxian account" more complex. White (1989) quotes Morley concerning "the ideological problematic" (p. 194), the myriad presentations of a text: "The problematic is importantly defined in the negative—as those questions or issues which cannot (easily)

be put within a particular problematic—and in the positive as that set of questions or issues which constitute the dominant or preferred ‘themes’ of a programme” (p. 194). A text is not as simple as it appears at first glance. Thompson (1990), for example, employs Depth Hermeneutics to explore the ideological character of media by using what he calls “the Tripartite Approach,” which includes the production and transmission or diffusion of texts, construction of the media message, and reception or appropriation.

The post-9/11 world brings new implications for ideology. Zizek (2002) argues that the collapse of the twin towers presented a possibility for moving beyond received ideological dynamics; but, notably, the rhetoric of the Bush administration forged even further commitments into new hegemonies. I discuss this process further in Chapter Six. Post 9/11 ideology often trades in a short hand discourse of militant-Islam-versus-the-West but remains similarly entrenched as did the ideological clashes of the Cold War. Contemporary ideological critique benefits much from the flexible comprehensiveness and critical spirit of post-Marxist possibilities.

Hardt and Negri (2000; 2004) offer a unique, contemporary view characterizing global political organization as transitioning from nation-oriented imperialism toward Empire. Empire exhibits a pyramidal configuration inspired by Polybius’ portrayal of ancient Rome. At the top are pre-eminent powers such as the United States, the G8, NATO, and other supranational bodies. Large multinational corporations and other nation states come at the next level, and institutions like NGOs and the UN follow. Hardt and Negri use the term “multitude” to refer to the networked, quasi libidinal human formation that Empire (if having its druthers) would unify into a people of singular will. The authors envision in the multitude the possibility of immanent democracy, but Empire ever



seeks to reterritorialize the multitude into unthreatening formations. I read as an example of the process the increasingly niche-orientation of media marketing and audience formation—diversity contained within the parameters of commodified culture. This process suggests a quasi-ideological dynamic that *Haunting Inquiry* appreciates. I interpret the multitude as a somewhat spectral proposition. As a force of dynamic flows, it is that which would ever escape Empire's configuring efforts. Does the multitude exist? Yes and no. Paradoxically, it cannot be seen as such through Empiric gaze, yet Empire itself emanates from its flow. I think of the multitude as not exactly ontological but, rather, as somewhat hauntological. It both evades and initiates Empiric structure. The multitude suggests more distance from Marx than some undoubtedly prefer, but a spirit of Marx haunts it. The multitude thesis may not be imaginable without Marx and his spirit of critique.

As discussed above, *Spectres of Marx* (1994) itself becomes implicated in the post-Marxist project and some of its attendant implications for ideology. The work rethinks "Marx" as a determinable project while seeking to maintain a spirit of it. *Haunting Inquiry* mobilizes a similar logic as a heuristic for reading ideology in and around media texts. *Haunting Inquiry* presumes that texts function ideologically but not circumscribably, determinably, nor entirely determining. A space emerges between ideological potentiality (for dubious results) and actual effect. Within that space, both dubious and hopeful possibilities hauntingly coexist. The different possibilities do not mutually exclude each other. They hauntingly co-constitute each other. No possible reading stands entirely free from dubious ideological potential or progressive possibility. Ideology becomes not ontological but hauntological.

### **Theme Five from the Literature: Ideologies influence the production of knowledge**

Ideology influences not only the media that children experience but the notions of inquiry used to interrogate media. I begin with a brief history to elaborate some of this theme's assumptions. As noted, I initially draw my view of ideology from the work of Karl Marx in *The German Ideology*, where he argues that those who control the means of material production also control the means of mental production—the production of ideas supports the production of surplus wealth. Ideology supports the exploitive arrangements of Capital, in which workers sell their labour for subsistence wages while the bourgeoisie extracts value from the labour and converts it into Capital. The idea that holds this set of arrangements together is *laissez-faire* liberalism, which emerged in the Enlightenment. Liberalism's history can be traced back primarily to Europe, but one may discern its patterns across the spectrum of global capitalist culture.

Engels (1884/2000) argues that a period of "Primitive Communism," a collective form of living, originally existed. At that time, people lived together as hunter-gatherers with no conception of private property. When people ceased being nomadic and employed agricultural practices, they created significantly more resources than they needed. These extra resources became new surplus wealth. Soon thereafter, people had the problem of what to do with this extra wealth. Who was to control it? Who was to own it? With the creation of private property emerged a new binary of social organization—those who owned, those who did not.

Eventually, that binary morphed into relations of slavery and ownership, as in the classical Hellenic and Roman contexts. Not only crops and livestock property, but also people—often taken in military conquest—were property. During each historical epoch,

ideas emerged that functioned to reinforce the dominant social relations. During the classical era of slavery, classical conservatism, with its ideas of servitude and benevolence, began: the slaves serve their master well and, in turn, can hope that the good master will take care of them.

Feudalism developed similar notions, but vassals were no longer property *qua* property serving the master. Rather, serfs served the property of the master. They worked the land and lived upon it. In order to survive, they used just enough of the value they created and then turned the rest over to the feudal lord. Notions of conservative service and benevolence held sway. Absolutism was a dominant idea, by which people believed the monarch spoke with the voice and authority of God.

By the 15th century, however, major changes began to occur. The landed aristocracy had begun to decline. A new mode of economic activity began to emerge: mercantile capitalism. In addition, with new technologies, the economic base began to shift from agriculture to the production of goods. The value of land was no longer in its capacity for producing food, but for producing raw materials, such as cotton, for production. The new capitalists were an emerging middle class, neither serfs nor aristocrats. They rejected the idea of conservative benevolence and, rather, saw themselves as active, independent agents manipulating the world and creating profit. The new idea, which supported their interests, was *laissez-faire* liberalism. Here, all men, and liberalism was primarily about men, were independent, autonomous, self-determining agents. This notion has informed ideology in support of Capital ever since.

Another factor that emerged along with the rise of Capital was science. During the Middle Ages, inquiry into the world was organized around a melding of Aristotelian and



Catholic philosophy. During the Renaissance, empirical science developed with the work of Francis Bacon and Isaac Newton. A picture of the natural world as an integrated organism emerged. This notion was powerful; and by the nineteenth century, writers such as Spencer (1857/1997) and Durkheim (1893/1984) sought to apply the principles of natural science to the social world. The social sciences were born.

How one looks determines to an extent what one sees. A fundamental assumption of natural science is that it is value-neutral, objective. The conceit is that the scientific approach's gaze simply identifies whatever is present, free of subjective considerations. This same assumption was an important feature in the hegemonic functioning of social scientific mass-media studies in the early to mid 20th century such as those of Cantril, Gaudet, and Herzog (1940); Lazarsfeld and Stanton (1944); and Hovland, Lumsdaine, and Sheffield (1949).

According to this theme, every epoch has its own narratives conveying its dominant ideas in support of the dominant material relations. These narratives communicate by and through some media. In addition, each epoch has a dominant mode of inquiry. I now illustrate some ways that ideologies have influenced the production of knowledge and how this process opens to paradox. Afterward, I will critique the analysis' meta-analytic conceit of ideological neutrality. My brief analysis addresses eight elements:

1. Dominant mode of material relations
2. Dominant idea in support of them
3. A typical form of conveyance
4. Media of transmission

5. An example
6. Dominant (or eminent) mode of inquiry
7. What that mode of inquiry can discern
8. What it is less able to discern

The present analysis briefly applies these elements to each of the following epochs in European history: primitive communism, slavery, feudalism, early capitalism, 19<sup>th</sup>-to-early-20<sup>th</sup>-century capitalism, the post-war period, and today. This analysis operates historically from the author's socio-historical circumstances. Moreover, it encompasses tremendous breadth, so that what the analysis sacrifices in terms of detail, it gains in scope. Although a further, much longer study would fruitfully explore the details, the present chapter allows for a valuable recognition of the broad patterns. In addition, the present analysis does not assume that it captures the many tensions and alternative perspectives, media, and genres at play in any of the epochs, nor does it deem to essentialize the epistemological positions outlined. Moreover, the analysis does not assume that epochal shifts occur from one to the other in a neatly demarcating order. Epochs change fluidly and often slowly, with patterns frequently unnoticeable before the passage of time.

Table 1 Brief Analysis of Ideological Relations by Epoch

|                                          | Primitive Communism             | Slavery          | Feudalism                   | Early Capitalism                   | 19-th to Early 20-th Century Capitalism | Post-War Period                 | Today                                         |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 1. Dominant mode of material relations   | Primitive Communism             | Slavery          | Feudalism                   | Early Capitalism                   | Industrial Capitalism                   | International Capitalism        | Advanced Capitalism                           |
| 2. Dominant idea in support of it        | Inter-connectedness of all life | Justice          | Loyalty                     | Spirit of exploration and liberty  | Social Darwinism                        | Welfare state liberal pluralism | Neo-liberalism                                |
| 3. A typical form of conveyance          | Myth                            | Dialogue         | Print                       | Book                               | Movie                                   | Situation comedy                | Web site                                      |
| 4. Media of transmission                 | Performance                     | Tablature        | Wood block                  | Gutenberg-era print                | Film                                    | Television                      | Internet                                      |
| 5. An example                            | Rituals and dances              | Plato's Republic | Accounts by traveling bards | Adam Smith's The Wealth of Nations | Wings                                   | Beverly Hillsbillies            | World Wide Web                                |
| 6. Dominant mode of inquiry              | Prayer/Chants/Spells            | Reason           | Accountable to Christianity | Humanist reason and science        | Positivistic social science             | Critical theory                 | Postmodern deconstruction                     |
| 7. What that mode of inquiry can discern | Signs for interpretation        | Status quo       | God's Kingdom upon Earth    | Innate goodness of "Man"           | Functional social organicism            | Ideology                        | Breakdown of Enlightenment, modernist project |
| 8. What it is less able to discern       | Material causes                 | Plight of slaves | The non-Christian Other     | Exploitation                       | Ideology                                | Lived experience                | Recourse to structural accountability         |

This account, however, fails to consider the epoch of its own production. I accept that an epoch, broadly considered, shapes modes of inquiry. Today's times influence what counts as "legitimate" media education inquiry. The above analysis, by extension, is a product of its own epoch of production. However, the analysis seems to assume that it can peer out from its own conditions. Reading the ideological influence upon media education inquiry beyond epochal conditions becomes an aporia upon which Haunting Inquiry affords a unique approach. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida writes of time being out of joint. Such time, then, is a time in which an undecideable spectre (neither wholly



embodied nor disembodied) of Marx returns to haunt just when many proclaim the "body" (or immanence) of Marx to be dead. The spectre returns, drawn by a debt, to remind such a time of memory's heterogeneity. The spectre ever returns, and the call comes not to try somehow to put time into joint but, rather, to learn to live with ghosts, to live in impossible mourning in a time out of joint, to live as out-of-jointly as the time. I do not think of this call for mutual out-of-jointedness as for an ideologically restorative equilibrium but, rather, as for a learning-to-live-with ghosts. Spectral chains rattle loudest with pronouncements of an *untimely* demise.

**Theme Six from the Literature: Media determine the ideological character of mass society**

"The Frankfurt School" names a group of expatriated European thinkers in America who wedded Marx with Freud to explain the development of mass consciousness and dogged resistance to genuinely liberatory societal change. Within the early Frankfurt School, Adorno (1991) and Horkheimer and Adorno (2001) argued that, informed by Enlightenment Instrumental Reason, the culture industries effected to capture, homogenize, and deindividualize humanity into one conquered whole. Adorno writes: "The total effect of the culture industry is one of anti-enlightenment in which...enlightenment, that is the progressive technical domination, becomes mass deception and is turned into a means of fettering consciousness" (as cited in Brooker, 1998, p. 17). Similarly, Strinati (1995) describes mass culture theory as prone to see the audience as "a passive, supine, undemanding, vulnerable, manipulable, exploitable and sentimental mass, resistant to intellectual challenge and stimulation, [an] easy prey to

consumerism and advertising and the dreams and fantasies they have to sell, unconsciously afflicted with bad taste, and robotic in its devotion to the repetitive formulas of mass culture" (p. 48). Similarly, Goldsen (1977) believes that television as a medium lulls viewers into hegemonic complacency, weakens art, and creates a passive audience.

Other views share the theme of media as a mass culture-determining agent. The idea that media themselves, such as film, television and radio, apart from their specific content, and particular films and television/radio programs, affect cultural changes has become known as "technological determinism." Inspired by Harold Innis (1964; 1986), Marshall McLuhan (1964) stands as technological determinism's most famous representative. He uttered the well-known dictum "The medium is the message." Unlike Adorno, however, McLuhan saw media's determining changes as essentially positive, ushering in new forms of being and an interconnected "global village." Baudrillard's (1994) ideas owe a debt to the McLuhanian tradition (Kellner, n.d.), but with a somewhat less optimistic prognosis. Media initiate a hyper-real world of simulacra, whereby the "real" world disappears into images of images. The appearance/reality distinction breaks down such that only appearance remains. I include Baudrillard here because of the strongly determining impact he believes media to have upon culture.

Baudrillard (1975) has critiqued classical Marxism. However, Hussey (2001) registers a similarity between Baudrillard's project and Derrida's (1994). Both texts rethink Marx. Nevertheless, Hussey (2001) writes, Baudrillard misses the potential of the spectral: "[I]n the world of 'excess simulation' which negates all possibility of 'law' or 'crime', the 'new international', as it is postulated by Derrida, could possibly be said to

be the spiritual heir of the spectral Marx" (p. 70). Derrida's (1994) "New International" names the admittedly hauntological political formation (not a "political" formation in a classical sense of the word...) to meet the horizon of a spectral Marxian future. The New International offers hauntological traction for a politics to come. It does not determine exactly what those politics will be, only that they haunt on after the reputed death of Marx. Baudrillard's critique of Marx endangers closing his politics off from a Marxian spirit (at least by that name).

Returning to the subject of very strongly determining powers ascribed to media, such powers, certainly, could be a media producer's dream. If a producer had the power to determine the response to her or his films, then movies presumably would rarely fail at the box office. Of course, determinism is not about individual media texts but macro culture as a mass and "massifying" agent, an entity that produces a mass audience. However, media educators do not teach masses. They teach individuals, classes, even schools. By the logic of Theme Six, mass culture continually conglomerates individual children into a mass. Media education as a comparatively micro enterprise cannot dislodge the children from that mass. Here, media education under-whelms due to scale. Media education's micro-dislodging of children from "massification" would become counteracted by the waiting onslaught of mass culture waiting to reassert itself. By the logic of the mass-society-media-ideology-determining theme, developing the kind of media education that could counteract massification seems impossible.

However, Haunting Inquiry regards the mass audience as a phantomic apparition. It does not exist, but that doesn't mean it isn't real. Even in an age of fragmented, niche audiences, the idea of a mass remains a powerful organizing idea. The Derridean



(Derrida, 1995a) *tout autre est tout autre* formulation characterizes each individual as radically individual. Haunting Inquiry takes this idea and inverts massifying logic to contend that *every mass is radically mass*. Every mass is wholly mass. In its wholly "mass-ness," it is also wholly other. A radical mass becomes impenetrably no longer constituted by individuals. In a sense, the individual and the mass become conceptually incompatible. The mass comes to be seen as a unitary entity, a singularity, an individual. As an individual entity, Haunting Inquiry regards the mass as radically individual, as an individual entity *other* to individuals assumed to compose it. Recall: every other is wholly other. The mass as other becomes other to the individuals presumed to compose it. The relationship between individual and mass becomes not of ontological incompatibility but of hauntological mutual constitution. By asserting the mass as radically existing, its character as an existing entity loses coherence. The mass *is*; it just doesn't exist ...

**Theme Seven from the Literature: Numerous ways are available for perceiving ideology**

Not everyone views ideology as monolithic. Many see it as open to pedagogical possibility. Mannheim posits a "sociology of knowledge," whose "ideological function...is in fact to defuse the whole Marxist conception of ideology, replacing it with the less contentious conception of a 'world view'" (Eagleton, 1991, p. 109). Recent debates further exemplify such watering-down of the Marxian position as some writers pick away at the belief in the determining possibility of ideology to manufacture hegemonic consent.

Therborn's *The Ideology of Power and the Power of Ideology* attempts a contemporary alignment between the Marxian thesis and contemporary sociological practice (Abercrombie, Hill, & Turner, 1994, p. 152). Abercrombie, Hill, and Turner criticize Therborn: "The drift of our argument is that Therborn overstates the importance of ideology, an overstatement most prominent in his view of ideology constructing subjectivities.... [I]deology may or may not have a role in the formation and maintenance of any economic practices" (p. 165).

However, the activity of reading ideology in cultural formations remains difficult and greatly important to media studies. Chouliarki and Fairclough's (1999) *Critical Discourse Analysis* engages contextual ideological readings. The constructions of late modernity (such as ideology) used for analysis say less about the texts than the broader contexts and their assumptions: "interpreting texts ideologically is not part of understandings of texts but a part of explanations, in that it involves locating texts in social practice partly by reference to the theoretical category of ideology" (pp. 67-68).

Freire and Giroux (1989) present an alternative approach and call for a critical integration of, and engagement with, popular culture and pedagogy to formulate "truly" critical practices. Giroux (1992) endeavors to rewrite pedagogy as inseparably "political" and broader than simply school practices. He calls for the crossing of borders of race, class, sexual orientation and others, suggesting that people have contingent, shifting, multiple, hybridized subjectivities. Lankshear and McLaren (1993) make a plea for critical literacy that uses praxis and recognizes postmodern subjectivities as well as social contextualization to challenge dominant relations for a new, more truly democratic political landscape. These writers seek to break out of modernist critical approaches and

to blend the critical and postmodern. Giroux (1994) explores textual analysis and theoretical application to formulate a popular culture pedagogy—one more inclusive, postmodern, and moving beyond borders of confinement than traditional critical orientations. Giroux and McLaren (1994) use cross-disciplinary approaches to articulate a pedagogy that interrelates with the politics of cultural studies. Giroux and McLaren see everyday culture as a political arena that should be engaged pedagogically. McLaren, Hammer, Sholle, and Reilly (1995) encourage students to engage critically the media as a cultural landscape of experience.

Views of ideological multiplicity, though, open to hermeneutic contingency. Such perspectives on ideology are less determining than previous ones. They see ideology as leaving room for pedagogical intervention. However, “opening up the box” of ideology to curricular interventions also allows for the possibility of ideological counter-actions. If media education can counteract the “dominant” ideology, that ideology, logically, should be able to counter the counteractions. By the logic of a dominant ideology thesis, dominant material forces already possess advantages of scale and access to large, even “mass,” groups of children. What would be taught Friday morning in school could be untaught Saturday morning in front of the television. A view of ideological multiplicity suggests the virtue of providing educators with hope for change. However, by the logic of ideological multiplicity, the same opening closes down the possibility for change.

Peter Sloterdijk (1987) has characterized the Enlightenment condition as one of cynicism, that this is the dominant mode of ideological functioning. Here, people generally understand the gap between ideology and social reality. People also understand their complicity in ideology but continue with what they do, regardless. “Cynicism” is



described as "enlightened false consciousness" (p. 5). It forms a sort of background to contemporary anomie. As an intervention, Sloterdijk proposes kynicism, a bodily cheekiness (pun intended). Kynicism is a "reasoned" response to cynical reason. Its model is Diogenes, who masturbated and defecated in the public market as resistance against Athenian idealism. Sloterdijk is familiar with Derrida and has recently written of him. *Derrida, un Egyptian* (2006) represents Sloterdijk's contribution to a series of works in memory just over a year past Derrida's death.

Haunting Inquiry perceives ideology as a ghost story. It is an account of textual implication never entirely present to a text yet never entirely absent from it. Haunted houses incur tales of the past explaining their haunting. Regardless, knowing the tale of a house's haunting or not knowing it does not save the visitor from experiencing the haunting. In this sense, the house's haunting bears something of the structure of an ontology. It seems to suggest some thing outside the text ever haunting the ghost story itself—some haunting reality. However, this thing-outside-the-text is not something determined or determinable but, nonetheless, something determining. This is the nature of the haunting outside and speaks to the haunting real of ideology. This account of ideology says something about dubious implications of knowledge and texts. However, the exact nature of what that implication (outside the text) is ever escapes efforts to signify it. Hence, accounts of ideology remain a ghost story, which itself returns to haunt the knowledge and texts it purportedly characterizes.

### **Theme Eight from the Literature: Ideologies become hegemonic**

The media that children use have an ideological shaping function operating through a socially mediated process. Over the years, various modifications to Marxian positions have been made. Neo-Marxisms in the West modified Marxism in light of Soviet repression and the continued failure of Marxian change to take root. This view of ideology was extended in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by neo-Marxist Gramsci, who infused the Marxian tradition with his concept of "hegemony" (Gramsci, 1971; Osborne, 1992). By "hegemony," Gramsci refers not to coercive control but to consensual dominion, the "voluntarily" assimilation of the dominant group's worldview (Ransome, 1992). The dominant group facilitates its hegemony through cultural power, through the institutions of church, school, and press (Osborne, 1992), in which it finds effective organs to transmit ideas and perspectives that legitimize its position. Louis Althusser's (1977) structuralist neo-Marxism posits Ideological and Repressive State Apparatuses to explain how subjects become interpellated by capitalist ideology.

As discussed earlier, Laclau and Mouffe (1985) offer a rethinking of hegemony as demonstrating a social logic more contingent than received Marxian categories admit. They extend this thinking as a framework for understanding and articulating left-oriented struggles. Laclau (1995) has also read *Specters of Marx* favourably. He conditionally supports deconstruction for its ability to "extend" and "radicalize" the ontological urgency and variability of the hegemonic form. However, the condition of his support is that deconstruction resolves the undecideability of its openness, its call to choose, and the particular ethical choices readers make. However, to decide undecideability would be to inaugurate or reaffirm something other than deconstruction. Laclau seems to appreciate

hermeneutic openness--but not too much of it! He requires of his openness an assured ground for ethics. But what would that ground be? Whose ground would it be? I appreciate Laclau's support for deconstruction with my own condition. As developed in my discussion of ethics in this thesis' Introduction, I recognize *Haunting Inquiry's* ethical grounding, its ethical kernel, as phantomic. Ethics are still possible, and, indeed, necessary. I read their grounding, though, as ultimately predicated upon metaphysical fiction (which would not be "ultimate" at all—if it was, it would indeed be the transcendental grounding I reject). *Haunting Inquiry's* ethics are substantive but not formulaically inductive.

An interesting recent resurgence of the term "hegemony" has been initiated by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez' reference to Noam Chomsky's (2004) *Hegemony or Survival* in a September 20, 2006 UN address. Chavez cites the work as support for his claim that the U.S. is a pre-eminent threat to global peace. Chomsky's work documents the history of US foreign policy, characterizing it as irrationally choosing the pursuit of imperial hegemonic pre-eminence over ultimate global survivability.

Hegemony, in the Gramscian (1971) calculation, mobilizes formal education as one of the institutions through which it becomes established. Extending this thinking, the fostering of hegemony based on the dominant group's interests is one of schooling's functions; and if the dominant interests change, education will support the changes. If the dominant interests change from capitalist to socialist or some other hitherto unimagined configuration, a certain logic of hegemony holds that education presumably would support the new formation. Therefore, within this logic of hegemony, education (and media education as long as it emerges in that institution) cannot undermine the dominant



interests of society. A type of media education that did not support dominant interests presumably would require two conditions:

1. A failure of the logic of hegemony in all its persistence and mutability and/or
2. A displacement of education within the society's power structure.

If education no longer served dominant interests, given their propensity to pursue their own hegemony, these interests, by a certain logic of hegemony, would withdraw their support from education. "Education" would become a rogue element in society. It is already a contested zone; and efforts toward marketization, curriculum unification, and standardized testing have undermined teachers' traditional influence. By an extension of the logic of hegemony, formal education would become a target of the other hegemonic institutions including whichever ones presumably replaced "education" in the society's configuration of the cultural institutions functioning to produce hegemony.

**Theme Nine from the Literature: Much media education thought also rejects assumptions of inevitable historical progress and the "reality principle"**

Here, children's engagements with media are seen to meet ideology contextually and in a negotiated fashion. One of Ricoeur's (1970) "hermeneuticians of suspicion" is Foucault (1970; 1971/1984; 1972; 1994) who mobilizes Nietzsche's (1989) genealogy to interrogate the "history of the present." Foucault explores modern institutions, in the process rethinks historical trajectory, and introduces sites of discursive struggle. Foucault rejects both dialectical materialism and semiotics:

Neither the dialectic, as logic of contradictions, nor semiotics, as the structure of communication, can account for the intrinsic intelligibility of conflicts. 'Dialectic'

is a way of evading the always open and hazardous reality of conflict by reducing it to a Hegelian skeleton, and 'semiology' is a way of avoiding its violent, bloody and lethal character by reducing it to the calm Platonic form of language and dialogue. (as cited in Hall, 1997, p. 43)

Foucault's conception of "discourse" is much broader than language. It includes both language and practice in the capacity to shape what people can say and know about an object, so much so, that no meaning exists outside discourse. As well, Foucault contextualizes discourse, representation, knowledge, and "truth." These elements are "true" only within specific historical contexts.

Hall (1980) combines Gramsci and Foucault, asserting that the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham had tried to form its own theoretical basis, distinct from sociology. Hall takes up a broad application of Gramsci's conception of "hegemony," extending it to include race. Feminist scholars have forced Hall to consider the conception even more broadly. Much media work considers a gender perspective (Winship, 1987). Nonetheless, Hall's approach balances meaning-making with material concerns and constraints.

Cultural Studies fundamentally concerns ideology. Hall (1982) argues that the critical paradigm acquired this concern after the behavioral science approach had repressed it with scientific containment and paradigmatic blindness. Turner (1990) contends that ideology is the most important concept in cultural studies. Hall revisited the conception and restored its prominence in critical inquiry. Thinkers associated with Althusser, Gramsci, Fiske, postmodernism and poststructuralism have reconfigured ideology in a process gradually moving towards recognition of more empowerment for

cultural readers. However, debates continue. Turner envisions the concept as distinct from economic or instrumental reductionism and as involving cultural embeddedness. Turner amends Hall's history of ideology's fortunes by discussing what he characterizes as "retreats from ideology" in the forms of resistance, pleasure, and postmodernism. While the old approach focused upon the top-down efforts of media producers, new orientations consider the bottom-up, empowering view. No longer does the text impose ideology upon the audience; rather, the audience, according to this literature, is now more capable of resisting these efforts than it was previously thought to be.

Nevertheless, Hall elsewhere incorporates a useful conceptual move to account for the different ways viewers decode text and/or discourse. Hall (2001) presents three hypothetical decoding positions: "dominant-hegemonic," "negotiated," and "oppositional." The dominant-hegemonic decoding position is somewhat like Foucault's discursively preferred subject position. The viewer takes the preferred connotation in alignment with taken-for-granted totalizing narratives. The negotiated position accepts the dominant narratives at their macro-level but asserts "independence" at the micro, local, or specific level. The oppositional decoding position locates the reader to rescript, reinscribe, and retotalize the dominant code. The reader invokes a globally oppositional decoding. Context of decoding is important here.

Cultural Studies is a large and dynamic field concerned with the audience's uses of a text and is the historical focus of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. Du Gay, Hall, James, Mackay, and Negus (1997) present an example of the "circle of culture" analytic model, which involves interdependent elements of representation, identity, production, consumption, and regulation. This model envisions

encounters with texts bearing encoded meanings and also studies audience reception, rescription, and modification.

Recent work in Cultural Studies has included the emergence and advancement of Queer Theory. Judith Butler's (1990) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* reads gender and sex as performative constructions within a regulative discourse, producing compulsory heterosexuality. This performativity becomes an often overlooked hegemony in second wave feminist practices. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's (1990) *Epistemology of the Closet* argues for the importance of addressing tensions between homo- and heterosexual definition; whether the tensions are a narrow or a wide-ranging problem; and whether same-sex choice is liminal, transitive, or separatist in relation to heterosexuality. She argues for the central importance of these questions across disciplines in Western culture. Elizabeth Grosz (1995), in *Space, Time, and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies*, troubles and disrupts received notions of the feminist or feminine text. Grosz conceptualizes female sexuality (and lesbian fetishization) as irreducible to phallic difference. She seeks to retrieve a feminine materiality from masculinist erasures. One aspect I especially admire in certain Queer Theorizing is the way it pivots on undecideability—undecideability of gender, sex, and identity.

Terry Eagleton (2003) also provides a vigorous updating of Cultural Studies discourses. I had the honour of attending an address by Professor Eagleton (2006) at York University. Of course, I had read some of his work and knew of his reputation including, especially, his incredulity toward postmodernism. My impression, coming away from the lecture was that on substantive ethical and political matters, Eagleton had much in common with what (at the risk of reductionism—a risk seeming not to bother



Professor Eagleton, so I'll continue) I'll call the "postmodern position." He characterized the postmodern position as valuing anything "outside the centre" at the expense of anything purportedly "of the centre"—the privileging of marginality over centre. He gave as an example of postmodernism's bankruptcy his observation of neo-Nazi skinheads in Germany. Their views are so repugnant within contemporary German society that when the skinheads demonstrate, the police must protect them from the outrage of majority-oriented citizens. Similar occurrences have often transpired in the United States with the Klu Klux Klan and other groups. So, neo-Nazi skinheads constitute a marginal position in German society, and, according to Eagleton's characterization of the postmodern position, they must enjoy ethical favour by virtue of their marginality. When a scholar of the standing, rigour, wit, and charm of Professor Eagleton forwards a straw man argument, I assume that he must do so in the interest of some compelling, if elusive, rhetorical subtlety. However, I admit that the subtlety remains so subtle that, for myself, I remember the straw man argument for only its most obvious features. If the "sniff test" of an ethical theory is sufficient indignation toward neo-Nazi skinheads, then it seems that Eagleton's salvaging of critical Enlightenment progress and the postmodern positions he decries (like, perhaps, *Haunting Inquiry*) are not so very far apart.

In *After Theory*, Eagleton (2003) critiques postmodernism's rejection of absolutes, virtue, objectivity, Truth, and history on the grounds of their importance to human experience. Postmodernism would see these concepts as mere fictions. However, I argue that they can be fictions and still remain appropriately important to human experience. I would agree that some research carried out in the name of "postmodern theory" may rightly be characterized as facile—breathlessly fawning discussions of

popular culture devoid of critical substance, save indignation toward critics who do not, in the researcher's view, adequately appreciate the full value of comic books, "reality" TV, and video games. However, certainly not all are guilty of such activity. One ought not to ascribe equivalency between all members of a group without regard for intra-group diversity. After all, U.S. President George W. Bush seems to believe in common values, transcendent Truth, and universal emancipation, but Professor Eagleton presumably would not want to be "lumped in" with him by virtue of such paradigmatic mutuality. An individual's political values are not reducible to an identification with an ascribed general category. Moreover, the distinction between individual specificity and paradigmatic tendency (exemplified by the Eagleton/Bush distinction) would seem to underline the fictive character of the paradigm as a determining and determinable category, a move consistent with the "postmodernism" Eagleton claims to decry.

An important concept for Theme Nine is power—seen as not one-way or top down, but as diffuse. This conception of power necessitates resistance. Here, without resistance, there is no power. Each bears and depends upon the other. They are coupled: power/resistance. This theme opens a way for media education to encourage resistive readings. Such resistance can be toward media complicity in sexism, racism, homophobia, poverty and exploitation. Children should learn to resist these forms of power. However, by the logic of this theme, symptoms of power such as poverty and exploitation require resistance for them to exist. Alternately, then, poverty and exploitation cannot be resisted without the power of poverty and exploitation. They discursively reinforce each other. As long as resistance exists, so does power. By the

logic of this theme, resistance to poverty and exploitation fuels the existence of poverty and exploitation if, at least, in different forms.

Haunting Inquiry understands the contingent and multiple bases of power as a radically open field. Certainly, there is value in broadening the foci of critical reading and practice. A strictly class analysis and economic frame of reference offers value to be sure. However, the very nature of *focus* involves perceptual exclusion. Focus on one point defocuses another. Focus upon power's discursive other inaugurates the focus' *other* other. Privileging one category in critical analysis subordinates another. Haunting Inquiry's openness to the neither reductively absent nor present otherwise of critical categories says "yes" to and extends a hand toward a radically diverse comradeship working for progressive action.

Recently, conservative movements have attempted to position themselves as marginalized political groups. Canada's Ezra Levant (1996) has functioned to characterize young, pro-market conservatives as marginalized and the "Redneck" (e.g. Goad, 1997) movement has co-opted the signifier-turning (or "reclaiming") strategy of Queer Theory. If Haunting Inquiry would say "yes" to radically diverse marginality, at what point does it say "no?" Derrida (1994) asserts that deconstruction would be impossible without a certain spirit of Marx. So, in a sense, a Marxian-ethical-political position is seen as undeconstructable with deconstruction. Moreover, there remains a difference between "Haunting Inquiry" and my particular use of the approach. I do not intend this assertion to reify "Big H" Haunting Inquiry as a Heideggerian metaphysical meta-ontology. Rather, I intend to underscore the phantomic elusiveness of theory—that it is more a textual practice than a fundamental grounding. I personally disavow certain

ethical positions (which should be evident through the course of this thesis). However, I do not reify Haunting Inquiry as a pre-packaged cluster of alternate positions. All such efforts to do so fail to close semantic slippages they open and perpetuate. Rather, my attempt is to offer the present text for reading in ongoing ethical discourses.

### **Theme 10 from the Literature: Media users create their own meaning**

Hall and the Cultural Studies approach opens to an appreciation of children as active media users. In his classic *Understanding Popular Culture*, Fiske (1989) asserts that popular culture is created at the intersection between people's everyday lives and the cultural products brought to the market by capitalism. Fiske claims that in this context, these products present an ironic dual view—that of the text's flawed preferred meaning and that by which the audience locates other meanings.

Buckingham (1993) is a prolific writer in media education who explores the meaning-making of children as audience members and strives to avoid reductionism. He often collaborates with Sefton-Green (Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 1994) on teaching popular media in school. Elsewhere, the pair calls for collaboration between cultural studies and action research in the media studies classroom (Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 1996). This call was criticized (Watling, 1997) for failing to adequately consider ethnographic researcher power, and the criticism was subsequently rebutted (Buckingham & Sefton-Green, 1998). Buckingham (1996) talks to children and parents about children's emotional responses to television and concludes that these responses are more complex and individuated than observers often believe. Published in association with the Broadcasting Standards Council, Buckingham's study recommends the use of media



education instead of regulation to deal with media violence. In addition, Kelley, Buckingham, and Davies (1999) explore the ways children make sense of sexual representations in media.

This type of work is distinct from social psychological approaches such as "effects" (McQuail, 2000) and "uses and gratifications" (McQuail, Blumler, and Brown, 1972) research. These approaches address children's responses to media. However, they do not critically address broader political formations. They are seen as structural functionalist studies and do not generally consider "ideology."

Other writers present more challenging views of meaning-making and the ways inquiry into it have been implicated in ideologies. Nightingale (1996) moves beyond what the author calls the "cultural studies ethnographic experiment" to conceive of the audience not as a phenomenon unto itself, but as a relation between text and human subject. Nightingale moves beyond the audience/text binary to a fluid fusion of the two. In other challenging literature, jagodzinski (1997a) argues that art and art education should move away from its traditional focus on Kantian aesthetics and engage cultural studies. jagodzinski argues that art and art education should contextualize with gender, for example, and explore subject positions. Elsewhere, jagodzinski (1997b) addresses Mas'ud Zavarzadeh's disparagement of pun(k) deconstruction and sees "culture" as a political engagement. jagodzinski works as an art and art educator to reveal patriarchal, neo-racist, and capitalist, hybridized contradictions.

The theme that children use media actively undoubtedly values children's dignity as competent human beings free from media's determining functions. However, a visitor to many public schools, shopping malls, sporting events, or other places where young

people gather will likely witness certain themes. Children display diffuse identities: hip hoppers, rappers, skaters, gamers, jocks, Goths, punks, etc. Many of these identities dovetail seamlessly with media-presented commodified youth culture. Children make meaning from media—yes. However, the meaning they often seem to make feeds and fuels their savvy in one meta-identity invisibly encompassing them all: their role as consumers. Children make meaning from media, but the media still seem to have an ideologically determining function. A troubling feature of this theme is that children actively make meaning from media, yet commodity capitalism as well as other ideologies (of race, gender, sexuality, authority, and others) persist. jagodzinski (2004) supports this contention by arguing that Capitalism makes use of youth's desire to sell more commodities.

Admittedly, *Haunting Inquiry* is not exclusively concerned with matters of political economy *per se*. The NFB documentaries that the framework engages are not the kind of popular culture or mass entertainment texts from which the paradox identified above emerges. Nonetheless, *Haunting Inquiry* provides a means to access the haunting Others of the classic documentaries. As such, it provides a way to go beyond received ideologies of race, gender, sexuality, authority, and other types. *Haunting Inquiry* remains ever open to the Other. When analyses close, they become static and susceptible to colonization and reappropriation by the very forces they intend to critique. Witness the meaning-making trajectory of rock and roll from threatening subversiveness to representation of dominant interests. For example, recall the path of the Rolling Stones from "rude boys" of the 1960's [Ed Sullivan declared he would never allow them to return to his show (Classicbands, n.d.)] to global economic force, in which local

Chambers of Commerce now clamour to host the group's concerts. Haunting Inquiry remains open to the haunting Other of ideological repurposing and hegemonizing that Theme 10 opens.

### Chapter Three: Deconstruction and Psychoanalysis Provide a Valuable Influence for the Development of Haunting Inquiry

I did not identify the paradoxes in the preceding 10 themes in order to negate their usefulness, for they demonstrate openings toward other meanings, openings to Otherness, in accordance to a spirit of deconstruction. According to Derrida (1984), "Deconstruction is not an enclosure in nothingness, but an openness to the other" (p. 124) and an effort "to discover the non-place or non-lieu which would be [that] 'other' of philosophy" (112). Derrida points a way to meet the Other—to respect and acknowledge the Other as radically such. Deconstruction recognizes that every Other is wholly Other ("*tout autre est tout autre*" (Derrida, 1995a). Haunting Inquiry intends not to close down such Otherness but to embrace and employ it to use the identified classic NFB documentaries to serve the curriculum and to meet the Other. I use Derrida's notion of "hauntology," of which I explain more below. In short, *hauntings* return in and around the films—hauntings of Otherness. I also find of great influence here the "constitutive outside" as developed by Derrida. Butler summarizes the notion:

There is an 'outside' to what is constructed by discourse, but this is not an absolute 'outside,' an ontological thereness that exceeds or counters the boundaries of discourse; as a constitutive 'outside,' it is that which can only be thought—when it can—in relation to that discourse, at and as its most tenuous borders. The debate between constructivism and essentialism thus misses the point of deconstruction altogether, for the point has never been that 'everything is discursively constructed'; that point...refuses the constitutive force of exclusion,



erasure, violent foreclosure, abjection, and its disruptive return within the very terms of discursive legitimacy. (1993, p. 8)

A psychoanalytic influence comes with my assumption that the hauntings I apprehend have to do with the particular psychic investments that I manifest. Moreover, the identification and naming of the hauntings defer endlessly. I explain more of what I mean by this below. Derrida avidly read Freud and then more and more Lacan afterwards. When Derrida wrote *Of Grammatology* (Derrida, 1967/1976), he had read only two essays by Lacan. His later development of "hauntology" owes a debt to Freud and Lacan.

### **Haunting Bears a Dimension of Political Hope**

First, the language of haunting suggests a sense of place, return, and of something unsavoury (Oxford University Press, 2005). "Haunt" bears a sense of recurring, if unseemly, experience: "Tis hard for a Man to lose a good Haunt, or an ill Custom" (as cited in 2005). Haunting is an illicit revisiting. A "haunt" is a place to which one returns but, again, a place of questionable repute. For example, an "old haunt" can be a tavern or similar "watering hole." The *Oxford English Dictionary* adds that a "haunt" is a "place of frequent resort or usual abode; a resort, a habitation; the usual feeding-place of deer, game, fowls, etc.; often, a den or place frequented by the lower animals or by *criminals* [emphasis mine]." A "haunt" is also a "spirit supposed to haunt a place; a ghost" (2005). In addition, it is a verb as in the act of haunting. It can be used to refer to the company of persons, "diseases, memories, cares, feelings, thoughts" (2005), and "imaginary or spiritual beings, ghosts" (2005). To be haunted is "to be subject to the visits and molestation of disembodied spirits" (2005).

Thus, what is it that evades, exceeds, remains, and returns ever beyond the apparent surface of a text? I believe these classic NFB documentaries are haunted. I do not mean by the imaginary ghosts of gothic literature, cinema, and popular imagination, but in relation to Derrida's (1994) conception of "hauntology." One implication of these hauntings is that one requires a haunting story to comprehend them. I use my readings of Castricano (2001); some of Derrida's (1967/1976; 1982) views on language; and the discussions of ghosts, spirits, and revenants in his, especially later (1994), work.

Freud's *unheimlich* and *nachtraglichkeit* are also useful here and are linked to hauntology. Freud wrote that "The German word *unheimlich* is obviously the opposite of *heimlich* ... meaning 'familiar'; 'native,' belonging to the home" (as cited in Burstein, n.d.). The uncanny is "Oddly, what is in another context oddly familiar" (n.d.). *Nachtraglichkeit* means "deferred action,"

[b]y which a cause or provocation seems to be activated after the event, strengthened by a lesser, though similar, event that occurs later—and which seems rather profoundly to suggest a notion of time not subordinated to the present. The loss of a loved one might be traumatic and perhaps not fully recognized, yet the subsequent loss of a trivial possession might provoke the severest grief, perhaps reactivating the original provocation under the sign of the lesser tragedy. (Phillips, n.d.)

*Unheimlich* and *nachtraglichkeit* speak to the uncanny, mysterious, and unexpected returns of hauntings.

I understand Haunting Inquiry as the creation of a narrative about persistent yet elusive characteristics of text, and I do this form of inquiry to facilitate "progressive" change, a new way of meeting and respecting Others. However, I fear such a definition may both say too much and not enough. Haunting Inquiry involves telling stories about texts and one's engagement with them and the hauntings that emerge. I perceive these hauntings as persistent, yes, but also ephemeral, or light and fleeting. Stories of ghosts are real in the sense of the power they have to evoke a response. However, one must remember, even when in the grasp of the tale, *there is no such thing as ghosts!* They are neither fully present nor absent. In addition, these narratives of haunting strongly relate to memory, and Haunting Inquiry acknowledges this relation.

This insight maps to the work of Castricano (2001). In *Cryptomimeses: The Gothic and Jacques Derrida's Ghost Writing*, Castricano studies the ghostly, the phantasmal, and the spectral in Derrida's work. Castricano uses the term "cryptomimesis" to refer to writing attuned to the ghostly in Derrida's texts. Cryptomimesis is "a writing practice that, like certain Gothic conventions, generates its uncanny effects through... a 'contradictory 'topography of inside outside' (Rand, as cited in Castricano, 2001, p. 6).... [T]he term cryptomimesis draws attention to a writing predicated upon encryption: the play of revelation and concealment lodged within *parts* of individual words" (Castricano, 2001, p. 6). I argue that ghostly inquiry can illuminate what haunts texts in terms of those things left behind as well as those things that have potential promise. What lurks in the dark corners, in the interstices of a text? What is there that we do not see in the text, yet perhaps sees us?

A term from Derrida's work that informs my thinking is that of the "trace" (1967/1976), which relates to another important Derridean neologism: "differance" (1982). "Differance" plays upon a double "meaning," (differance cannot be said to *mean* anything). It suggests differences between signifiers necessary for a system of language and different meanings possible for words and chains of words. Each signifier as well as cumulative chains of them suggests multiple meanings. Moreover, another sense of "difference" employs a pun in French, involving *defer*. The meaning of a word or chain of words defers until a writer adds another word. However, the cumulative word that would end the deferral never arrives. The "trace" refers to other possible meanings of words or texts in addition to those assumed employed or inferred in a chain. I argue that these other meanings haunt texts.

I also use Derrida's (1994) foray into the ethical/political domain with *Specters of Marx*. This work is a key text in Derrida's focus upon ghosts, spirits, specters, and revenants. It is a response to early 1990s neoliberal triumphalism and American author Francis Fukuyama's boasts in *The End of History and the Last Man* (1993) (as discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis) that capitalism and supporting State institutions had triumphed over competing configurations (namely, the Left's project), fulfilling liberalism's telos of progress. Here, as I read Derrida, Marx emerges as neither dead nor alive. Marx becomes spectral. As Marx and Engels (1998) famously wrote, "A spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of Communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre" (p. 33). The original trajectory of that spirit may be ostensibly curtailed, yet its own revenant returns to haunt us. The revenant is the



figure of haunting return. For Derrida, ghosts remain awaiting recognition, like that of Hamlet's father:

*Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio* (as cited in Derrida, 1994, p.176).

The ghost comes to Hamlet to speak to him. Marx often wrote of ghosts and spectres. Now, as I read Derrida, ghosts "write" of Marx. The efforts of commentators like Fukuyama to proclaim Marx dead function as attempts to exorcise Marx's ghost—tacit recognition that his ghosts continue to haunt. The louder proclaimers announce Marx's death, the surer his spectres haunt us.

Lacan's ghosts have an ethical complaint of being put between two deaths: symbolic and physical. For example, Lacan (1977) has discussed formations of desire in *Hamlet*. The space between two deaths is the place of drive devoid of desire (Zizek, 1993). This is desire uncircumscribed by the symbolic—in this sense, desire as neither dead nor alive. I note that Lacan reconsiders "the Good" as the privileged ethical category. Instead, he prefers "the beautiful." Lacan employs "'Antigone's strange family values to suggest a more flexible model of ethics, one that is focused on the encounter with the inhuman and the fragile boundary between life and death'" (as cited in Kaufman, 2002).

Edwards (2005) argues that instances of the gothic are evident throughout Canadian literature. These are moments when a Canadian spectre reveals itself. These are linkages of terror and place, transgressions of the law, interruptions of bodily integrity, among other spectral occurrences. Gothic authors reveal the impossibility of articulating themselves as "Canadians." These attempted articulations are interrupted by efforts to contain if not eradicate various forces. Edwards provides an example suggested by the

2000 NFB documentary *Speakers for the Dead*. The film recounts what happens when residents of Priceville, Ontario discover in their cemetery four original tombstones, which had been plowed under for a farmer's field. The grave markers show that early residents had been former slaves and black veterans of the War of 1812. The tombs hauntingly trouble the town's conception both of its history and its racial ancestry. Edward's gothic inquiry reveals haunting Otherness in the Canadian imaginary.

I think of these forces as forms of the Other. Canadian culture attempts to bury racial, cultural, and political Others. However, the ghosts will not remain buried. They haunt on and emerge throughout Edward's survey of Canada's literature. I see these ghosts of the Other as emerging in the very contradictions of trying to articulate a presumed unified national identity. Granted, some sense of recognizing the Other is an inherent part of many Canadian national identities, but it also signals their impossibility. Edwards writes:

[T]he ghost of a Canadian self, whatever that might be, returns to haunt us again and again. This spectre is a sign of instability, insecurity and colonization. It is the sign of the land itself, and the land's history. It signifies the triumph of Canadian nationalism, but it also serves as a prophesy of its failure. (p. 168)

Haunting Inquiry would allow students to attend to such ghosts. They may be terrifying. However, they are the Canadian Others. Haunting Inquiry seeks not to deny them, avoid them, or bring them back to life. Haunting Inquiry believes something will always be haunting us. To respect Others includes attending to their hauntings. This attention may be undertaken with a curriculum approach based upon Haunting Inquiry.

### **The Most Disturbing Haunting Occurs When I Stop Feeling Haunted**

I find ghosts, unstable disruptions, haunting the classic NFB documentaries. Moreover, I ponder what it is in me that draws me to these stories of hauntings. Psychoanalytic theory provides useful insight into desire. A Lacanian (Lacan, 2001) view posits a split subject, a subject self-alienated against itself, futilely and forever pursuing various objects of desire as a way to fill a psychic split, a fundamental emptiness incurred upon entering into the symbolic order, the world of language and culture. When I entered the world of language, what did I leave behind that I seek forever to find in culture? What do the ghosts "in" these films announce of what I seek?

These questions take up challenges I find in some recent contributions by Jagodzinski (2002; 2004), mobilizing a psychoanalytic reading of desire, fantasy, and young peoples' psychic investments in media. A media education question becomes not only "How do I respond to this media?" but "Why do I experience this particular response?" The "unconscious" as a heuristic device provides a way to question and probe such responses. The use of this device is an important and under-utilized dimension of media education.

For me, haunting suggests a kind of Žižekian (Žižek, 1989) fantasy. In theory, the transgression or "concealed" status of my desire coexists with a veiling narrative I find on the surface of the text. Žižek in *The Plague of Fantasies* (1997) tells of the existence of some(thing) outside an ideology, some(thing) which is required to allow the ideology to function—a supplement (also in the Derridean sense of paradoxical extension/replacement), a fantasy element that both elides and reveals the unconscious. Ideology as such cannot contain its "inherent antagonisms" (p. 4), so fantasy works



within ideology to conceal what ideology cannot bear to acknowledge. However, fantasy creates markers of what it hides. I see these as ghosts. Ghosts as fantasy markers can unhinge "common sense" notions of media and curriculum from ideological constraint. Ghosts belong to a haunting configuration of the Lacanian Real and/or Derrida's constitutive outside.

To some in these times of contemporary global Capital, in this post cold-war era, no *justifiable* ideological clash appears to be taking place (Zizek, 1999). To these "neo-conservative" observers, "freedom" has won out over communist tyranny, and free markets with attending liberal democratic institutions spread around the world with evangelical fervor. Where this proselytizing is resisted, the clash is dismissed as being between forces for and against modernization, or between reason and fanaticism, or, in the speeches by U.S. President Bush, between good and evil. Zizek characterizes the dominant ideology of the contemporary global world as "post-political." Accordingly, no great political obstacles remain to "the Good." All that remains is the detail of "enlightening" a few corners of the world to the "benefits" of modern markets and liberalism. Once that goal is achieved, the result would be the functioning of the calculus of opportunity, competition, prosperity, and democracy.

Here, in a world, which no longer attends to the Others that haunt us, politics itself is rendered as an extinct entity. All that remains is the "common sense" of free markets and liberal democracy. However, to render "politics" as obsolete says less about the obsolescence than the particular political view being silently privileged.



I recall the line from Earle Birney's (1964, p. 37) poem "Can. Lit":

*"It's only by our lack of ghosts we're haunted."*

To me, these words speak richly of the relationship between Haunting Inquiry and keeping alive past hopes. Haunting becomes an aporia, a kind of impossible contradiction. I am most haunted when I neglect haunting. I am most haunted when I am no longer haunted. At this moment, it becomes important to not "give up the ghost," to not let hopes die. This moment emblemizes broader political hopes. As counter-articulations become increasingly difficult to share, their importance increases. Derrida (1994) implied that the heralded death of Marx ushered in recognition of hauntings by Marx's specters. As long as spectres haunt, hope remains. When Others may apparently no longer haunt, when a misleading sense of ease rests upon the Earth, when we become comfortable with suffering, when hauntings may seem to retreat, then that day will be a worrisome time.

#### **Derrida's Notion of a Friendship-to-Come Opens a Hopeful Way to Think about Relations with Others**

Derrida (1997) has drawn attention to the problems and instabilities of friendship as it has been considered since at least Aristotle. In *Politics of Friendship*, Derrida explores 10 movements through different engagements by philosophers such as Montagne, Kant, Nietzsche, Carl Schmitt, and Maurice Blanchot, with an address attributed to Aristotle, "O my friends, there is no friend" (p. 1). Through the apparently contradictory assertion of addressing members of a category, only to announce that the category itself is empty, Derrida moves through permutations of the friend/enemy

distinction, of that distinction's either/or logic, to allude toward a both/and alternative, to point toward a new kind of friendship. Derrida calls for the possibility of a new, democratic friendship—one not closed, but open. He calls for the possibility of an emergent friendship, one as the political basis for a new form of democracy, one as of yet unimagined, but ever “present.” Aristotle’s invocation “O my friends, there is no friend” seems to close logically. It introduces the category “friends” and announces it as empty. It invokes a kind of closure, but one disruptive and disturbing. The contradiction, the paradox brought forth suggests that though the door may be closed, it remains vaguely ajar. “O my friends, there is no friend”—the paradox disturbs friendship. Neither friendship nor the stated condition of its emptiness as an empirical set is entirely fixed. Aristotle addresses his friends and then announces to them that there are none. By the end of the book, Derrida expands the notion of friendship to be the basis of political life and an emergent democracy. The work “concludes”: “O my democratic friends....” First, the direct object of the statement has expanded, narrowed, tweaked with the modifier “democratic.” “*O my democratic friends.*” However, unlike Aristotle, Derrida leaves the statement open, incomplete, unconcluded. He leaves it hanging, pointing forward, even promisingly forward—promising nothing specific—merely promising possibility.

I value Derrida’s treatment of friendship. I appreciate his problematizing the apparent logical commitments and metaphysical assumptions about it. I welcome Derrida’s unmooring friendship from its trace dependency upon enmity. When the medieval castle guard demands of mysterious approachers, “Halt! Who goes there: friend or foe? Announce yourself!” the demand is less a question than an order. “*Friend or foe?*” It is interrogative, certainly. It seeks information, but it surely does not beg for it.

The demand simply seeks to establish a sorting of the logical parameters of friendship. I appreciate Derrida's disturbing of friendship's narrow, either/or landscape.

Here, friendship and its logical corollary, enmity, form the basis of the political. One defines oneself politically by the friends one keeps—whether in one's community, party, or nation. Derrida demonstrates that friendship is defined through its Other, through its prescribed enemy. Without that mooring, "friendship" as I know it would no longer remain the same. Similarly, the political self as such would no longer exist. The nation without its Other has a diminished purpose. Without an enemy, one has no need for the friends one keeps to defend against it. Without the enemy, the political subject as it is currently constituted has no purpose. Similarly, Lacan sees friendship as a sharing of a repressed secret to maintain political cohesion, and Žižek (1993) discusses "the Nation Thing" as a fantasy formation to fill the fundamental emptiness of political subjectivity. I think of a friendship-to-come as haunting entrenched forms of friendship and political subjectivity.

### **On Deconstruction and Psychoanalysis**

I read Psychoanalysis as a textual heuristic. I do not read it as a closed analysis but as a useful framework implicated in difference. Psychoanalysis provides an account of the unexplainable. In my use of deconstruction, a difference exists between stating a question and asking one—a difference exists between writing *about* deconstruction and *doing* deconstruction. Each mobilizes different assumptions about text. This study considers both. I endeavor, first, to *do* deconstruction by evoking the films' hauntings. I also endeavor to *give an account* of the deconstruction. I seek to operationalize



deconstruction for educational and curricular usefulness. Certainly, a bad faith might be perceived between hauntology and ontology. Deconstruction *per se* is not something amenable to instrumentalization. However, I read operationalization as one haunting of a nexus involving deconstruction, the films, and the curriculum. It reflects my own hauntings over a perceived need within the discourse of education to serve institutional demands for "usefulness" and "clarity." Of course, these demands are not necessarily *bad*. The New Testament declares, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's" (Holy Bible, Matthew, XXII, 21). Operationalization must render unto Caesar his due if my research is to be intelligible before him.

A common charge asserts that deconstruction does not rise to acceptable standards of rigour and clarity (Derrida, 1995b). I reply that deconstruction is simply a different type of work alongside surveying, ethnography, and action research. It is unintelligible only through the lens of what it critiques. It critiques assumptions of presence and clarity. Therefore, it is not surprising that the forces promoting these virtues take issue with deconstruction. If it doesn't deserve the name "philosophy," rightly so, for deconstruction problematizes the definition, shows its infections, iterations, and its difference. Deconstruction suggests the recognition of something new. Moreover, deconstruction is useful to education. The curriculum now identifies multiple perspectives (Alberta Learning, 2005), and deconstruction fulfills their logic because of its radical openness to them. The charge that I'm not doing "good" or "proper" deconstruction would involve applying one paradigm to another. On what standard would such a judgment be based? It would involve judging hauntology by ontology.



Both deconstruction and psychoanalysis are *Other* to classical scientific formulations and approaches. I do not deny the usefulness of those formulations. As I explained in Chapter Two, such approaches provide occasion for paradoxes. Deconstruction and psychoanalysis offer a way of meeting and mobilizing the paradoxes.

## **Chapter Four: Haunting Inquiry Is Relevant to Curriculum**

### **Inquiry Because of its Openness to the Other**

This chapter argues for the relevance of Haunting Inquiry to curriculum inquiry by discussing five premises. First, Haunting Inquiry helps me to reconcile my own experiences as a student, teacher, and curriculum scholar. Second, the two endeavors appreciate the "Othernesses" of discourse, discipline, identity. The third premise delineates a common concern of opening to the Other. Fourthly, both endeavors seek new ways to explore curricular phenomena, and, finally, Haunting Inquiry and curriculum inquiry both share a call to ethics.

#### **1. My experiences as a student in school were difficult, but a haunting approach to curriculum inquiry has some value for me as a student, a teacher, and a curriculum scholar.**

It requires courage to share that in my own history as a student, I failed Grade 8, was kicked out of several schools, and, in fact, have never attended even one day of regular high school. In the academic world, I often speak of my challenges, my position of Otherness, and the ways my identities inform my politics. However, what about the challenges I dare not mention? I have often framed my work in terms of a working-class allegiance. This allegiance "respectably" frames my experiences mentioned above. It conceals my deep sense of shame because of them. For the last 25 years, I have created a life and identity for myself from which, few would guess those experiences.

I worked in a factory for seven years at a hard, underpaid, dirty, and dangerous job. I did this work for seven years as a man who possessed only very modest formal

education. However, I hungered for education. I spent weekends at the public library, reading everything I could. With a passion—the kind of passion one witnesses in the confluence of a clearly defined goal with one's symptomatic pursuit of their *objet a*—I pursued the cultural capital of what I considered I had missed.

In this course of events, I experienced a deep split between the “I” whom I wanted to be and the “thou” which I believed circumstances had shaped me. Over the years, I have internalized that split, sent it to a crypt deep within myself. However, as tales of haunting affirm, such things often return from the crypt. Haunting Inquiry helps me deal with that split productively, giving me a language through which to understand it and to support my work as a curriculum scholar. The “I” and “thou” each give the other a valuable perspective.

## **2. Curriculum inquiry meaningfully speaks to how discursive pressures shape identities.**

“Curriculum” (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, and Taubman, 1995) suggests a diverse and dynamic endeavor, one, as of this writing (November 2005), struggling with its own identity and future direction (Next Moment, 2005). One function of this struggle delineates, defines, and defends “curriculum” as a discursive field. A Foucauldian heuristic is useful to understand the process. Foucault writes of power and the processes by which discourse creates not only subjects, but also objects (Foucault, 1972). Here, the discursive creation of objects of inquiry and discipline is of particular interest.

Curriculum scholarship also examines the pressures upon the experiences of its practitioners. Some ways of engaging curriculum become legitimate, while others

become marginalized. Foucault's genealogy illuminates this process. Foucault (1994) contends, "Let us give the term 'genealogy' to the union of erudite knowledge and local memories which allows us to establish a historical knowledge of struggles and to make use of this knowledge tactically today" (p. 42).

For example, some curriculum scholarship examines how emotions in the research enterprise can disrupt and circumvent formal structures of organization. These structures can be political, administrative, and intellectual. Behar's (1996) work concerns finding a way to relate sensitively within the research setting to one's presentation of vulnerability. Chambers (2004) writes about finding the "Path with Heart" by practicing research that matters. These articles reveal that the researchers' work and perspectives faced strong institutional resistance. How curious that work highlighting the researchers' vulnerability and their engagement while following a "Path with Heart" should be so threatening to the power-laden, formal apparatus of State institutions.

Perhaps, that is just the point. The apparatus provides structures, conduits, and tracks to channel the researcher into properly acceptable approaches. It is so strange, so apparently contradictory that such a powerful institution armed threateningly with systems of administrative censure, logos, and scientific rationality should be so challenged by two modest researchers. One can describe the phenomenon in a variety of ways: "structure," "apparatus," "discourse," "bureaucracy," and "patriarchy." Patriarchy is a good way to describe what informs the institutional anxiety. Gender is relevant here. It is relevant that the researchers are women.

Behar and Chambers write of paths between the formal roads mapped by official cartography. I believe that when one moves an inquiry outside the apparatuses of censure,



then threats and intimidation become weakened. "Dominant" formations cannot allow this result to happen. A time may come when research of vulnerability or of the heart is subsumed within the dominant formation. One may not want to think of this possibility. One may not want to believe in it. However, if one reflects, one can hardly deny that the formation has this kind of all-consuming effect. That is its genius. It swallows up everything that comes up against it. Those who one day decry the formation, slowly, often imperceptively, eventually come to praise it (admittedly, indirectly) and to defend the hitherto critical voice's new position within the apparatus. We are not there yet. When we are there, though, another voice will emerge and will be equally reviled. Until that time, however, vulnerability and heart will continue to speak Otherwise. This speaking resonates with my own hauntings in and around the space of curriculum.

### **3. Influential curriculum inquiry literature shares with Haunting Inquiry an openness to haunting Others.**

Being open to the Other, curriculum scholars often listen with an ethical ear to its hauntings. Important literature in the field productively opens to haunting. Sumara (2002) approaches reading's haunting Other by seeing multiplicity in the purported singularity of the literary engagement: "Every moment is two moments" (p. 71). The hermeneutic circle's involvements of engagement and interpretation become as one in reading. Here, reading becomes a confluence of history and memory, of hermeneutic being and becoming.

Salvio (1998) opens to haunting Otherness by positioning the teacher-scholar as melancholic by excavating scholarly and pedagogic (s)cryts in *Fugitive Pieces* (Michaels,

1996). Salvio explores characters in this novel for use of melancholia as a means of personal excavation. The excavation of (s)crypts, what haunts from the apparent crypt of a text, is very sympathetic to *Haunting Inquiry*, especially of Abraham and Torok's (1994) treatment of the crypt. *Haunting Inquiry* shares an affinity with Salvio's type of work and that of De Castell (1995), who argues that design [as text and practice (technology)] constrains and renders artificial the philosophy of education. Therefore, scholars ought to abandon "preservation of the antiquated texts and practices" (p. 255). De Castell seeks to open thinking to Philosophy of Education's Otherness beyond the constraints of design. To the degree to which this argument accepts that such Otherness hails and haunts the designs, the project of *Haunting Inquiry* finds relevance. Finally, Richardson (1994) opens to the haunting Other by positioning writing as a method of inquiry and way of knowing—not just a chore for telling about the social world. Richardson proposes that scholars not simply write up the research but WRITE THE RESEARCH. Such writing is not a transparent window upon the world. It is part of the world. Richardson blurs the classical distinction between signifier and signified, an important site of Derrida's (1994) haunting. Such writing does not merely signify the world. It intervenes in the world.

**4. Haunting Inquiry and curriculum inquiry share a concern with locating new ways to engage curriculum experience.**

"Don't listen to what your teachers tell you, you know. Don't pay attention. Just, just see what they look like and that's how you'll know what life is really going to be like."

Woody Allen (1989) *Crimes and Misdemeanors*

*a) Some curriculum literature productively opens possibilities beyond what I call "paradigmatic specularity."* Two texts, each in its own way, challenge the hegemony of the scientific paradigm in educational research discourse. In "Epistemology and educational research: the influence of recent approaches to knowledge," Maxine Greene (1994) argues that these approaches de-centre and unfix educational research from the "secure" moorings and compartmentalizations of science's conceits. Greene seeks to maintain conflict and contingency over antiseptic control. In "Challenging images of knowing: complexity science and educational research," Brent Davis and Dennis J. Sumara (2005) argue that complexity science undermines linear, analytic science and its capacity as an organizing underpinning of educational research, an underpinning, which validates the quantitative, subordinates the qualitative, and even maintains the "necessary" distinction between two.

These readings alert me to what I understand as "paradigm wars."

Academics started thinking about paradigms in the modern sense with the publication of Thomas Kuhn's (1962) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Kuhn argues that



scientific communities require basic ground rules or received truths. These rules taken together comprise the paradigm through which the discipline operates at a particular point in history. These rules provide the groundwork for inquiry, but they also suggest boxes into which adherents expect the results of inquiry to conform. However, the discoveries of anomalies, which fundamentally challenge the assumptions of the paradigm, occur from time to time, with the paradigm of the moment, or "normal science," strongly resisting the undermining challenge of the anomaly as long as it can. This process moves gradually and forms the basis of Kuhn's structure of scientific revolutions.

Naturally, these revolutions do not neatly demarcate in time. Different paradigms in different stages of development occupy discourses concurrently. The situation is not exactly like, but similar to, the case of some poor *schmo*, recently fired, but told she or he must stick around long enough to train the replacement. As can be imagined, conflicts are exacerbated. Jurgen Habermas, in 1971's *Knowledge and Human Interests*, delineates three paradigms huddled in resentful conflict around the water cooler: the empirical-analytic, attending to people's technical interests; the critical theoretic, serving emancipatory interests; and the situational interpretive, opening to practical interests.

Within the purview of each of these paradigms, their adherents often contend that each contradicts the others. At deep levels, the empirical-analytic is incommensurable with the critical theoretic because of the former's conceit of value neutrality and the latter's view that the empirical-analytic justifies morally untenable relations of power and resource distribution. The situational interpretive would be at odds with both others because of its contention that neither appreciates the historicist nature of the human engagement with the world.



However, at least one more paradigm is unstated in many declarations of the three: namely, a metaparadigm—a paradigm which assumes that a relationship, exists among the three. A variety of such metaparadigms is possible. In the classic 1978 paper “Toward curriculum inquiry in a new key,” former Chair of the University of Alberta’s Department of Secondary Education Ted T. Aoki presents what I read as an opening to a more fluid and perhaps hopeful metaparadigm than the necessarily conflictual one. Aoki begins by presenting orientations to curriculum inquiry aligned with each of Habermas’ three paradigms. As I read the piece, Aoki suggests that educational researchers can obtain a more complete picture of the world by employing all three. The world does not comprehensively fit into any one of the neat boxes presented by the three paradigms. There is a time and a place when it is useful to be able to point to the world and name aspects of it, to make value judgments about social relations in the world, and to be able to say, “At least that’s the view from where I’m standing.” In short, all the paradigms have value.

Canadian communications theorist Marshall McLuhan (1964) says that societies shape the world with their technology, but that eventually, the technologies turn around and shape the societies. I believe that thinking about one’s paradigmatic commitments in this way as well may be valuable. They can be valuable heuristic devices to discuss not only the world but also the research enterprise. They frame one’s vision to exclude “extraneous” elements from focus. However, although such framing helps one to see some things, it blinds one to others. This problem is the limiting perspective of paradigmatic specularity.

"We are a sign that is not read."

Hoelderlin (as cited in Heidegger, 1968)

*b) I find a valuable metaphor for the importance of new ways of seeing in the Gospel of Saint Thomas (Meyer, 1992), a text that some readers believe to be a lost account of the life of Christ.* As is well known, the four extant Gospels of the New Testament describe the Kingdom of Heaven as something people will see in the next world. What sets the Thomist Gospel apart is its declaration that the Kingdom of Heaven is not in some world beyond this; rather, it is part of this world, living in rocks, trees, and people, but one cannot see it. This idea appeals, especially if one is concerned about finding new ways of seeing in the research enterprise.

In Chapter Five of Edward W. Said's (1994) *Representations of the Intellectual*, "Gods that Always Fail," the author describes philosophies, ideologies, gods, leaders, etc. that "think" for the intellectual rather than the intellectual thinking for her or himself. Said's vision is profoundly ethical. He calls out to women and men who will dare to think for themselves. Such an intellectual must not fear loneliness. If we demand to be able to live true to our convictions, then, sooner or later, I believe, we get to a place where we are all alone standing before the abyss of what can be known. Many never get that far. We do not need to. As we go further and further down that path, we often find someone nearby to put her or his hand on our shoulder and say, "What are you sweating for? This is the truth—relax!" Said calls intellectuals to choose for themselves their "absolute" value, not to take someone else's word for it.

In Soren Kierkegaard's (1843/1985) *Fear and Trembling*, the philosopher meditates upon this precipice of one's absolute. He uses as an example the Old Testament account of Abraham and Isaac, in which God tells a man, Abraham, to kill his son, Isaac, as proof of his faith. What does Abraham do? Reason tells him that surely, this invocation is mad, but faith tells him to obey. This dilemma is the crux, the sharp edge of the sword between faith and reason. Moreover, if God is telling him to do this questionable deed, and he does not obey, surely God will be angry. Do we live by the reason of our own minds, or do we maintain faith in something beyond, some transcendental Truth?

In the 1965 song "Highway 61 Revisited," Bob Dylan provides an illustration of Abraham's problem:

Oh God said to Abraham, 'Kill me a son'

Abe says, 'Man, you must be puttin' me on'

God say, 'No.' Abe say, 'What?'

God say, 'You can do what you want Abe, but

The next time you see me comin' you better run'

Well Abe says, 'Where do you want this killin' done?'

God says, 'Out on Highway 61.'

Of course, Abraham chooses to kill Isaac, but God intervenes at the last moment to spare him. What did Abraham appeal to in his choice, faith or reason? Many theologians would say that Abraham chose by faith, but who is to say? This story illustrates the precipice over the abyss of what one can know. Does one choose faith or reason?



As I read *Representations*, Said seems to choose reason. If we choose a philosophy, an ideology, a god, a leader, or any other such thing by faith, that thing will let us down. What is the implication here for educational research? This is a terrain with no shortage of "gods" very anxious to accept converts. Behavioral science, administrative efficiency, liberal citizenship, Marxism and all the other -isms, phenomenology, and hermeneutics are examples. I read all of these as the kind of gods of which Said speaks. Within the embrace of each one are faithful adherents, who would surely say that, no, their god is not one of the false gods; rather, their god is a window onto the Real. So, what do we believe as educational researchers? As Said concludes, the answer beckons not to place our faith with one of these gods, but to live by the virtue of our own "reason" and/or heart.

However, can we completely separate faith from reason? How do we read the lyric from Dylan's song above? Does Abraham choose to kill Isaac because of the "rational" choice of self-preservation or because of the fearful faith (or fear of the possibility) that the voice of the invocation is from God? Perhaps the "gods" we are most beholden to are those whom we do not realize we believe in. In Said's invocation to reason, are there hidden gods? Perhaps in intellectual work, hidden gods sit upon our shoulders like ghosts and whisper into our ears. Perhaps it may be too much to ask that we brush off these companions. Perhaps the thing to do is just to recognize their "presence," and, in the interests of intellectual honesty, try to admit their place in the conversation—to shake hands with our invisible gods. *Haunting Inquiry* provides a means to do so.



c) *Some writing can provide access to that which writing closes off.* Plato's dialogue *Phaedrus* (1956) provides an account of the invention of writing and its presentation to Egypt's Pharaoh:

Theuth said, 'This discipline, my King, will make the Egyptians wiser and will improve their memories: my invention is a recipe for both memory and wisdom.' But the King [Thamus] said, 'Theuth, my master of arts...your paternal goodwill has led you to pronounce the very opposite of what is [your invention's] real power. The fact is that this invention will produce forgetfulness in the souls of those who have learned it. They will not need to exercise their memories, being able to rely on what is written, calling things to mind no longer from within themselves by their own unaided powers, but under the stimulus of external marks that are alien to themselves. So it's not a recipe for memory, but for reminding, that you have discovered. And as for wisdom, you're equipping your pupils with only a semblance of it, not with truth. Thanks to you and your invention, your pupils will be widely read without benefit of a teacher's instruction; in consequence, they'll entertain the delusion that they have wide knowledge.'

Cynthia Chambers (1998) reflects upon writing as re-membering, as a digging up of one's "dandelions" to find a meeting between our young and our present selves in order to locate our home in self and in all the places where we walk. I like a line from the old Leonard Cohen (1971) song "Famous Blue Raincoat." I think it says something about this type of writing-memory-work:

It's four in the morning, the end of December

I'm writing you now just to see if you're better

New York is cold, but I like where I'm living

There's music on Clinton Street all through the evening.

*I hear that you're building your little house deep in the desert*

*You're living for nothing now, I hope you're keeping some kind of record.*

*I hope you're keeping some kind of record!* That line has stuck with me since I first heard it years ago.

Re-memBEr(R)ING? (a nervous experiment in postmodern scribbling)

#### Four Variations on Writing Re-membering

1. *What is this "re-membering?"* I remember a child, out of place at school, out of place at home, out of place in the neighborhood, Out of place in the self? I remember finding the place to be IN, walking alone upon the fall's faded grass. I hear wind rustling leaves. That is the place. I remember.

2. I *re-MEMBER*. What is this lost member? I don't think I'll go there. I'm not enough of a psychoanalyst...

3. *re-MEMBERSHIP*, membership in the club, the club of oneself? What did Groucho Marx say? "I would never want to join any club that would have me as a member?" (1994) Stringent criteria. "I think he's ready to join."

4. *member-SHIP*. What is this ship, and upon what sea do we sail? "To be a captain, you just need to have a loud voice." But what's he saying? Toss the anchor. Heave Ho. There, we're finally moored, secured to some grounding. Thank God for the bottom of the sea. "Land ho, 400 feet away, only its straight down." We've finally found a secure mooring on this ripping sea. We've finally found out who we are. What now? The anchor is not hooked upon the sea floor? But then what, may I ask, are we moored to? *The bottom of our own ship*? And so on we sail...

*And so on we sail...I hope that you're keeping some kind of record.* The journey is the process, but the record can become the next step of the journey. Ironically, and contrary to what Thamus asserts, writing can re-awaken a kind of memory. There are many kinds of literacy, many of which lend to control and containment. After all, literacy created illiteracy. However, some kinds of literacy can lead to a process of freeing and opening. Some kinds of writing do so. I think this is the kind of writing to which Cynthia Chambers refers. I welcome this kind of work to help locate "subjectivity" in our educational research, this work, which rewrites the edict of Thamus. Re-membering shares a certain spirit of Haunting Inquiry. Both share a concern to find something lost that will not totally allow itself to be given up. This meets a haunting Other of memory, time, and the self.

#### 5. Haunting Inquiry bears an ethical dimension so important to curriculum inquiry

a) *A need still exists a need for an ethical position.* Lord John Reith, the founding commissioner of the BBC, once spoke before the British House of Lords and



compared private sector broadcasters to the bubonic plague: "Somebody introduced dog-racing into England.... And somebody introduced Christianity and printing and the uses of electricity. And somebody introduced smallpox, bubonic plague and the Black Death. Somebody is minded now to introduce sponsored broadcasting into this country" (1952, col. 1297). Reith was not afraid to speak his mind. He is also the namesake of the Reith lectures, the occasion for Edward W. Said's (1994) meditation upon the intellectual and her or his representations.

I see connections between Said's *Representations of the Intellectual* and the work of Karl Marx. Said says that intellectuals must speak the truth to the powerful no matter what the cost, and they must do so without dogmatism. In today's political reality, the truth that the intellectuals should speak often appears as left-leaning. I believe that Said asserts intellectuals must avoid "dogma" for at least two reasons. First, he believes his assertion to be true. Second, avoiding dogma defends intellectuals against right-leaning naysayers. Such critics argue that intellectuals are mired in ideology. The former premier (Ralph Klein) of my own province (Alberta) has often said so.

In his first chapter, Said asserts that an intellectual either serves the dominant power and interests or stands apart from them, critiquing what she or he sees. Said envisions the intellectual occupying the same space as the oppressed, and so she or he must speak publicly against oppression. Chapter Two holds that intellectuals should question their obligations to nation and tradition. Along with Chapter One's placement of the intellectual on the side of the oppressed, Chapter Two can read as a variation of Marx and Engel's (1848/1998) invocation in *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* to the



workers of the world to unite because the nation state serves the interests of Capital not the proletariat.

Said further develops the notion of intellectuals' suspicion of nation and tradition by discussing the concepts of "intellectual exile" and "marginality." Whether through actual political exile or the cultivation of marginality, the diasporic intellectuals see things outside the normal and dominant by moving away from the conventional and comfortable. We cannot truly see the forces that cause suffering unless we recognize them as such. I interpret this move as somewhat analogous to the Marxist notion of "class-consciousness."

Of course, differences as well as similarities exist between classical Marxism and Said's vision. Writing in nineteenth-century London, Marx wrote about his world from the perspective of that world. Capital and its functioning have become much, much more complicated since then. Moreover, we now know that the functioning of ideology is much more complicated than how Marx (1964) described it in 1845-6 in his *The German Ideology*, where he wrote that in all epochs, the dominant means of mental production support the dominant means of material production. However, if the letter of Marx's vision may not convince modern audiences, its *spirit* remains. The specter, which Marx and Engels in *Manifesto* declared haunted Europe, haunts us still, and elements of it lurk quietly between the lines and pages of Said's call to intellectuals. The dominant knowledge production today supports the dominant power and interest positions. Said argues that intellectuals have the choice either to serve those dominant interests or to step back, take the less secure route, and question them.

This position has much to say about ethics and educational research. Regardless of the paradigm from which one speaks, problems exist in this world. 1.3 billion people live without access to clean drinking water. 850 million souls live in abject poverty. In excess of 20 million of our fellow human beings in Africa have HIV or AIDS. Moreover, the world is interdependent. The work one does as an educational researcher, in whatever quarter of this vast world, has implications for its interdependency. Do we claim those problems have nothing to do with our endeavors? No, we do not. We make a stand. Human moral obligation demands that we walk with those who suffer.

As researchers, we give the world's problems a variety of names. We all know the "dragon" in our own way. Some call it an "accident of history." Others call it "Capital." Still others signify it as *logos*, but whatever we call it, we must not help the dragon in its fiery work. It will need to find its apprentices elsewhere. Haunting Inquiry ever opens to the ethical Otherness of such dragons.

b)

*Convictions are more dangerous enemies of truth than lies.*

Friedrich Nietzsche (1878/1996, p. 234)

*Nietzsche's oft-quoted aphorism has less to do directly with Marilyn Cochran-Smith's (1991) idea of learning to teach against the grain (TAG) than it does with some other ideas related to and holding whispered conversation with it.* TAG elaborates teachers as active participants and shapers in the ever-moving location of teaching. This view argues against scientific or instrumental definitions of curriculum "implementation" or "delivery," which would annihilate subjectivity as irrelevant. Cochran-Smith envisions teaching as elaborate and multifaceted. Admittedly however, so does the scientific

framework against which she writes. Nevertheless, Cochran-Smith's vision is not of a predictable, measurable, or contained structural matrix. She writes of a fluid, unfolding, and living process.

The scientific paradigm against which she writes often has a very different view of subjectivity. In a sense, it functions as its own self-privileging subject, and, as such, speaks a dominant definition of learning. It defines "teacher," and student teachers, accordingly, are well advised to adhere, to pack themselves and their subjectivities into the box provided and marked "teacher."

Teaching-against-the-grain is different from many scientific approaches for at least two reasons. First, as suggested above, certain scientific approaches are those of a dominant subject speaking about the subordinate object (teaching). The presumed speaking subject is typically scientific, managerial. However, Cochran-Smith does not simply reconfigure that subject/object binary. She does not say merely that a more rightfully legitimate TEACHER articulates "teaching" as the more accurate but still subordinated object of speech. Doing so would be a case of, as the rock group The Who sings, "[Meeting] the new boss, same as the old boss." Rather, Cochran-Smith would toss out that binary assumption and situate teacher subjectivity, teacher selfness, within a more fluid, cooperative arrangement. The teacher's voice joins a collection of other voices.

However, I must say something about what I read as the political function of teaching-against-the-grain. As its name suggests, it is about teaching against established practices. It is a view of the teacher as agent of change, the teacher as reformer. As we know, in thinking about social action for change, at least two related, yet distinct



orientations are at play. "Reform" is about tweaking the system from within. The other, more radical, approach is not content with teaching-against-the-grain, but concerns dispatching the entire block of wood to the scrap pile of curriculum history—if "curriculum" itself even would remain.

Radical change advocates are rarely indiscriminate, wild-eyed enemies of peace. In all fairness, I believe many such people simply quietly teach, research, write, and speak out on behalf of their vision of a new and better world. This point brings us back to Nietzsche's statement, "*Convictions are more dangerous enemies of truth than lies*" and a recurrent disparagement of overtly critical or emancipatory approaches: by what justification does one group of people initiate change in the interests of another? What recent century has not been scarred by the ruins of such activity?

Maybe teachers can best work for change through quiet back channels. Perhaps teachers best enact positive developments by working within the system at the site of paradigmatic resistance. Who is to say? Procedures of teaching-against-the-grain suppose an ethical stand. Although TAG walks upon this earth, it still looks toward a New Jerusalem. However, rather than naming and pointing to what it believes is best for people, teaching-against-the-grain remains open to the idea that what is best can emerge in an unfolding process of teaching while being mindful of Nietzsche's warning. "Curriculum-for-change," by definition, opens to the Other.

*c) Patti Lather (1992) argues that fundamentally male, modernist critical pedagogy is blind to issues of feminism and that by endeavoring to "emancipate" others, the critical emancipator inadvertently perpetuates relations of domination.*

Here, where the critical pedagogue seeks to redress the condition of haves and have-nots,



she or he simply reinforces a different configuration of that dynamic in which the critical pedagogue possesses knowledge, enlightenment, etc., and the person targeted for emancipation lacks those qualities. Lather suggests that pedagogical research ought to avoid this modernist type of "othering." This call is consistent with a certain spirit of *Haunting Inquiry*. The "other" in the kind of modernist conceptions Lather critiques is an ontological other. It is an inavoidably subordinated other playing through its unrecognized metaphysical binarism. As suggested earlier in this thesis, hauntology endeavors to avoid that trap by mobilizing a both/and configuration of ontology's present/absent binary—making it, properly speaking, neither. Therefore, a certain spirit of "emancipation" continues while avoiding necessary subordination of the Other and remaining open to horizons of hope. Indeed, Lather explicitly frames her project in terms of Derridean deconstruction.

Similarly, Michelle Fine (1994) brilliantly and valuably reviews literature that moves away from the subject-object binary but that still works for social justice. The literature in question argues against quantitative social science and its debt to the Enlightenment project of naming, predicting, controlling, and "improving." However, a challenge is to transcend that project and still work for a "better world." Fine acknowledges, "Residues of domination linger heavily within... qualitative texts" (81). How can one intelligibly articulate a better world without using the symbols of the present one? Fine refers to the researchers in her review as a "collective" (p. 81). That word has deep roots in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century leftist, modernist struggle. Moreover, the goal of "social justice" is very modernist. Whose conception of justice are we pursuing? Justice for all in each person's own image (I hear echoes of *Genesis*)? This conception

smacks of libertarianism. I strongly doubt that Fine and her collective envision an ethos of radical individualism, in which egoistic selfishness becomes the preeminent virtue, a perspective suggesting, for example, that taxation for social programs the payer does not use constitutes a form of theft (Nozick, 1974).

Many postmodern educational researchers are nearer in their quests to those of their modernist critical colleagues than their paradigmatic disputes admit. Those against forces of domination should not be infighting at the expense of broader goals. The forces that "left" or "progressive" researchers pit themselves against have it easy enough without those who seek a better way to be fighting among themselves. We live in an age when the (former) Canadian Alliance and Progressive Conservative (Canadian political) parties can unite in *their* common "struggle," yet those seeking a better way at the sites of gender, sexuality, race, culture, and, yes, class, often fight their fiercest battles amongst themselves. Ralph Chaplin's (1915) hymn, "Solidarity Forever" offers a valuable reminder:

*In our hands is placed a power greater than their hoarded gold  
Greater than the might of armies magnified a thousandfold  
We can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old  
For the Union makes us strong.*

The lyric speaks to the promise of working together, shoulder to shoulder in common "design" to improve the world, but with a balanced and healthy view of unity within a framework supporting the Otherwise. This vision speaks to the shared concern with meeting the Other in both Haunting Inquiry and curriculum inquiry.

## Readings of the Films

### Chapter Five:

#### A Cleanliness far from "Godliness":

#### *Farewell Oak Street* and the Regent Park Public Housing Project Haunt with a Persistent Narrative of Hygienic Modernization

"Keeping clean was a daily battle and a lost cause. Dirt always won out on Oak Street."

*Farewell Oak Street* (McLean, Burwash, &  
Glover, 1953)

"May 10th. Thank God for the rain, which has helped wash away the garbage and the trash off the sidewalks...Someday a real rain will come and wash all this scum off the streets."

Travis Bickle, *Taxi Driver* (Scorsese,  
Phillips, & Phillips, 1976)



(Farewell Oak Street, n.d.)



1953's *Farewell Oak Street* announces the development of Canada's first major public housing project, Toronto's Regent Park. The film depicts nineteen people who had previously lived in one house in Toronto's Cabbagetown before its buildings fell to demolition and in their place was built the shining, modern development. I came to the film—I believe I found it speaking to me—because it resonated with stories I recall from my mother about growing up in and around Toronto in the 1940s and 50s. She was 10 years old when her father, a carpenter, died of cancer. He left my mother as the oldest of five girls and one boy—the youngest child being an infant. My grandmother found herself alone with six children and only modest government relief to support them. She lived the rest of her life in Toronto Public Housing. My family history reverberates with the struggles represented in the film. *Farewell Oak Street*—a touching, well-made film—has often been reviled. It provides an opening into haunting narratives of a Toronto space of evolving if persistent notions of modernizing hygiene and architectural/public policy interventions into social problems.

What is “hygiene?” What does it mean to be “hygienic?” Certainly, the concept relates to health. One needs to be hygienic. One needs to remove dirt and germs from oneself. After all, such unhygienic factors can contribute to ill health. Cleanliness, then, is a virtue. It can mean the difference between living well, and, in its extreme failure, not living at all. Cleanliness is a life-or-death virtue, but it is more. *Revelation* states, “And there shall in no wise enter into [the Kingdom of God] any thing that defileth” (Holy Bible, Revelation, XXI, 27). The sentiment is more popularly conveyed as “Cleanliness is next to Godliness.” According to this thinking, the further we move from good hygiene, the further we move from “God.” As Augustine (2001) writes on the nature of evil, evil is



*privatio boni*—privation of good—distance from God. How can we know such distance in this world? How can we know we are near or close to God in a world where Divine markers are, to say the least, hermeneutically elusive? Calvinism tells us that we can know our virtue by the presence or lack of God's favour upon us—by the good fortune we have in our lives. Another way of knowing exists. If cleanliness is next to Godliness, cleanliness can provide a clue. Logically, it does not necessarily follow that uncleanness is far from God (and, thereby, according to the Augustinian formulation, evil). After all, Jesus is said to have been a carpenter, a man who got his hands dirty. Cleanliness itself, then, guarantees no proximity to Godly virtue. Nonetheless, a virtuous role seems to beckon for those who help others toward cleanliness, or toward hygiene. Recall that when Jesus washed the disciples' feet (Holy Bible, John, XIII, 5), he modeled a way toward God and virtue by washing the dirt from others. A similar, if dubious, implication haunts *Farewell Oak Street* and public interventions into the depicted neighbourhood's social problems.

### ***Farewell Oak Street***

The film was a project initiated by NFB Commissioner W. Arthur Irvin but completed after his tenure. Indeed, the project was inherited by incoming Commissioner Albert W. Trueman and, in some respects, turned out to be an unwelcome inheritance. The film was controversial. Many viewers loathed it, especially the new residents of Regent Park represented in the film. The Member of Parliament for the area represented took exception to the film, likely because of the poor way his constituency was presented. Evans (1991), in describing the film as "Marxless" (p. 38), especially takes note of the

film's apparent central premise, that "no old possessions or attitudes" (pp. 37-38) would be brought from the old Oak Street to the new, shining apartments of Regent Park.

Despite the controversies surrounding the film's release, *Farewell Oak Street* was very much in keeping with a strand of tradition within the NFB, especially Grierson's views of documentary as a form of "progressive," "democratic," public education (Blais & Bairstow, 1973). Admittedly, his vision privileged a certain educated elite as the purveyor of wisdom and saw in this model of public education a means to reduce structural antagonisms—between labour and management/ownership and between the poor and the vision of a cohesively functioning society. Grierson's early allegiance with the Rockefeller Foundation very much set him on the course of this direction (Nelson, 1988), and *Farewell Oak Street* bears similarities to a number of early Grierson-produced films in Britain, especially 1936's *Housing Problems* (Low, 2002).

The 17-minute film is comprised of six acts. The first opens with everyday life in the modern Regent Park. We are introduced to the residents of the new development. We tour through suites and are introduced to the sparkling homes and their sparkling residents, with much attention paid to their clean practices. The film comments not only upon the homes but also, indeed, upon the cleanliness and character of the people: "Everything is sparkling and new and tidy, and kept that way. The Bennett floors for instance and the Bennett children"; "The Tweeds are great washers and scrubbers"; and "The McLean kitchen has a new modern look, as do the McLean ladies" (McLean, Burwash, & Glover, 1953).

The film brackets an imaginary space and begins by declaring, "This was the western end of Oak Street" and "not a trace of it remains, except its people" (1953). Later

on, in the last act of the film, the narration picks up at the same space: "This was the western end of Oak Street" and "not a trace of it remains, except its people" (1953). A hygienic clearing out occurred: a removal of all the dirt, all the architectural filth, and all the ways in which, in opposition to the dictum that "The scent of the rose lingers on the hand that gives it," a removal of the architectural filth touched those who had inhabited it.

The neighbourhood children play outside; and Mrs. Brown calls her son, Nick, in for supper. He enters the home to find his father in the living room, trying to hang some curtains. Father wonders if the curtains are straight, so Nick goes outside, stands in front of the house, and estimates the level of the curtains. The voice-over narration of the CBC's (and *Bonanza*'s!) Lorne Greene declares that life was not always this pleasant on Oak Street. The shot dissolves and reemerges with Nick crawling over a pile of rubble on the old Oak Street, on what somewhat resembles the bombed-out debris of Wartime London.

Indeed, the second act of *Farewell Oak Street* depicts life back in the tenements before they were demolished to make way for the modern Regent Park project, and in a sense, they are depicted as a war zone. The enemy is dirt, filth, and a general problem with hygiene. We see Mrs. Brown waging an unending and hopeless battle with filth—"Dirt always won out on Oak Street" (1953). "The children got dirty. All children do anywhere, at school, at play, but Oak Street children suffered a dirtiness, which it seemed impossible even to fight against" (1953). A social worker or teacher or some other clean and well-dressed professional woman brings the son home from school, saying he has lice. The clearly distraught Mrs. Brown replies, "Oh, I wash his head every week. Where do they come from?" (1953). The professional woman sympathetically states, "It's these



old places" (1953). The whole family feels shame, both public and private. A very controversial scene of the film depicts "other kinds of filth": "Sometimes, the vermin was human, and the shame was secret" (1953). This comment is the first representation of its kind of a pedophile. The Browns and the other nineteen people who share this building all use the same bathroom and have very tenuous privacy. The Brown's daughter lives under the watchful eye of a pedophile living in the next suite. He accosts her—"You want a candy, Jenny? Ah, come on. Don't be scared" (1953); they grapple; she runs home and cries. She is oppressed by both the advances as well as the shame. Another boy living nearby costumes himself to leave his house and to leave the dirty environs of Oak Street. The young boy makes himself impeccably clean but then rejects the overtures of his parents, clearly ashamed that he feels he must dress up and leave in order to be someone. He walks off, past lovers lurking in the shadows, immaculately dressed into the foreboding, melancholy darkness. We do not know to where or to do what.

The third act turns to the economic conditions enframing the 19 peoples' lived realities on Oak Street. This act discusses market conditions and how these contribute to the kind of squalid circumstances of Oak Street; however, it does so in such a way that it naturalizes the market and the alienation of "wage-earners" (1953) like Jim Brown: "His working hours are spent helping to erect modern little bungalows, which he can't afford. The most modest new home is out of his reach—to buy or rent. He'd consider himself a lucky man to live in one of these" (1953). During this narration, we see what we used to call "Wartime houses" dotting the dirt of a new subdivision. The examination of these macroeconomic conditions, while not fundamentally questioning them, does question public priorities within them:



Most houses, newly built, cost more today than much larger houses cost a few years back. Costs have soared, prices have soared, apartment rents are high, too high for Jim Brown. Homebuilders must compete with industry builders for cement, and glass, and steel, and labour. We're an expanding nation. We build fabulous structures to house machines, and motors, and assembly lines. We raise up mountainous shelters for commerce and finance, but we can't give Jim Brown a good home he can afford...that is to say, we couldn't... (1953)

The film announces that Canada's ability to build immaculate buildings to house equipment, capital, yet while people live in squalor, is a gross misuse of resources and a perversion of priorities.

Indeed, the city will rebuild the slums as Canada's first large-scale public housing project—Regent Park. The development will consist of 1,300 homes. The narration accompanies footage of the demolition: "Down came Oak Street, down came the verminous walls, the unclean, unhealthy rooms, and down came the fire hazards, the juvenile delinquency, the drunkenness, the broken marriages, and up rose something new—the nation's first large-scale public housing project..." (1953). This fourth act of the film lays out some principal tenets of the post-War liberal welfare state in Canada. Noting that all will pay a share, the following narration proceeds over footage of the construction: "Rents based on income: Kelly the pensioner, 29 dollars a month; Brown the truck driver, 45 dollars a month; Jakes the toolmaker, 75 dollars a month; Brown paying a little for Kelly; Jakes paying a little for them both; and the people of the city and the rest of the country putting in a share" (1953).

The fifth act of the film shows the Browns coming back to their new home after the razing and reconstruction. The family arrives: "Though it seemed it never would happen, the day finally came when they could move in, a raw spring day, but sunny. They were a sight when they arrived with their bags, and boxes, and bundles, like refugees on the road instead of the new tenants of number 640 Regent Park" (1953). Awe-struck, they enter their new dwelling. The scene is admittedly emotional. Gentle strains of flute, violin, and soft piano are heard as they come in and cannot believe what they behold. The walls shine to an almost blinding sheen. They go through each room dumbfounded by the beauty of the new home. The little daughter puts her hands on the walls, but her mother comes along and scolds her, frantically wiping any fingerprints off the wall. The family moves through the main floor of the house, up the stairs, and to the bathroom where they hear a strange noise—but where's Nick? They come in to see him already stripped to the waste, getting into a hot bath.

The final act brings us back to where we started, back to everyday life in Regent Park. After helping his father hang the drapes levelly, Nick comes back into the house for dinner. Unlike a dinner scene back in the old Oak Street, this scene shows the Browns singing, talking, and being a "good family." Indeed, life in Regent Park is much better than it had been on Oak Street. It is much cleaner. Mrs. Brown comments upon the new curtains: "...I must say, I'm glad to get them up; those other old things were terrible rags. Nothing from the old place is any good here"; the narrator adds, "Old possessions, old attitudes, not a trace remains" (1953). The film ends by reaffirming the principles of public housing and Canada's post-War liberal welfare state. A prosperous nation like Canada has a responsibility to provide clean, proper housing for the poor and not-so-

poor. The film concludes by contending that "[There are] too many Oak Streets for a rich resourceful nation, but one has gone for good!" (1953).

The narrative of modernizing hygiene implicit in the end of Oak Street, of its razing, and the building of Regent Park is clear from the foregoing description of the film. However, a sly implication accompanies the proposition of hygiene: the film subtly suggests that the residents of the former Oak Street are to blame for their poor hygiene and, by extension, for their poverty and attendant social problems. The opening act of the film makes such a celebration of everyone's clean practices, their clean homes, and their clean persons. The film suggests that as their architecture changes, something of the people also changes. Clearly, their standard of living improves, but something else happens as well. The film observes, "The face may be the same, but the expression is different. It's brighter, and more interested, and friendlier. Life has changed along the quarter mile that was Oak Street" (1953). The film does not deal with how the buildings of Oak Street came to be so decrepit and run-down and contributing to the substandard life. The hidden proposition would be that, obviously, the inhabitants allowed the buildings to run down the way they had. On some level, the filmmakers must be aware of this accusation in that the film speaks to it by noting that with the new buildings of Regent Park come a new attitude: Thus, the new buildings initiate the new attitude, one of cleanliness, one that will not allow social problems to reemerge. However, this proposition is complex. By noting that the new buildings initiated the new attitude, the film implicates the attitudes of the inhabitants of Oak Street in their poor living conditions. At one time, the structures of Oak Street were brand new. How did they become so decrepit, and how did the presumably parallel attitudes of the original



inhabitants take a turn for the worse? How is the new attitude at Regent Park qualitatively different, and how will this attitude never allow decrepitude or social problems to creep in again? Some implications of that question may be found in the historic and current discourse around Regent Park and its contemporary plan for redevelopment.

### **Cabbagetown**

Before I examine life in Regent Park and the contemporary plan for its redevelopment, I will touch upon broader narratives of Oak Street. Oak Street was in a Toronto neighbourhood which used to be known as "Cabbagetown," named for the vegetables grown on the front lawns of the houses occupied by Irish immigrants there (Bébout, 2002). It was an "Anglo Saxon" neighborhood, described by Canadian writer Hugh Garner as the "largest Anglo Saxon slum in North America" (Garner, 1968, v). Garner wrote of the area in his novel *Cabbagetown*, released in an abridged version in 1950 and its full length in 1968.

The novel depicts the lives of a number of characters in Cabbagetown over a period of 8 years, focusing on Ken Tilling. The characters all try to make their way in the world, traveling down the path toward what they will become. As they engage in their journey, they come face to face with dominant issues, especially those concerning moral conduct and sexuality. They find their journeys and what they want to become increasingly difficult to attain as they find themselves put into subject positions that they may not have originally aspired to. Specifically, a girlfriend of Tilling's, Myrla Patson, finds herself pregnant and slowly but surely, though obviously not in a premeditated fashion, becoming a prostitute. Ken Tilling undergoes a kind of intellectual journey or

transformation. Through his challenges of authority and his difficulty as a worker, he eventually attains a socialist consciousness and then leaves Cabbagetown to fight in the Spanish Civil War for the republican cause in the Communist-led brigades. Garner shows some of the humanity and tragedy of young lives in the area. However, he is careful to balance over-romanticization with some negative views of the area and its people. He writes, "Nobody should get eulogistic over a slum" (vi). He allows himself to criticize the area (as he himself is from the place), but he resists licensing moralistic observers from without.

After Oak Street was leveled and the new Regent Park built, Garner commented upon the lingering resentments, which outsiders/the general public held toward the people even in their new homes. He wrote, "Contrary to uninformed and malicious public opinion at the time, there were no substantial instances of rehabilitated slum-dwellers storing their coal in their new unaccustomed-to bathtubs...." (vi). Apparently, one can take people out of slums but, according to persistent negative imaginaries, removing the slum from the people is somewhat more difficult. A moralistic code governed even the early days of Regent Park. For example, the strict admission criteria even stipulated that single-parent families were not allowed ("About Regent Park," n.d.).

As visitors to and residents of Toronto will note, a neighborhood called "Cabbagetown" still exists in the city. However, the new neighborhood of that name lies just north of the original Cabbagetown and bears practically no resemblance to the original. Today's Cabbagetown is an upscale, gentrified neighborhood, standing in contrast to its preexisting neighbour, Regent Park. Hugh Garner wrote about the new Cabbagetown in *The Intruders* (1976), noting its similarity in name only.

The old Cabbagetown, which Oak Street ran through, was seen to have engendered a stain upon the city of Toronto and that corner of Canada. The issue may be thought of as a hygienic problem. When what Garner called a "slum" was removed, scrubbed away, and replaced with the new Regent Park, the area carried on at least in terms of its name. However, the new Cabbagetown was one which caused no shame. The new, hygienic version carried with it a fiction and imaginary of quaint city living, without the unpleasant, unhygienic aspects of the old Cabbagetown.

### **Life in Regent Park**

The haunting narrative of hygiene surrounding Oak Street and Regent Park goes back over 50 years. Sometimes the textual manifestations of the discourse suggest some curious ironies. In a 1954 *CBC Newsmagazine* documentary on the demolition of Oak Street and building of Regent Park, the film treats the "substandard housing's," ("Rebuilding Regent," n.d.) dangers and the filth of the old Oak Street area, yet curiously refers to the new development not as "Regent Park," but as "Regent's Park" ("Rebuilding Regent," n.d.). This reference provides an interesting variation on the development's name because, as many are aware, "Regent's Park" is the name of a college at Oxford University, traditionally training Baptist ministers.

This inadvertent invocation of "Regent's Park" and its concomitant association with Baptist Protestantism is noteworthy. In the broadest terms, what sets the Baptists apart from other sects, specifically Roman Catholicism, with its practice of pedobaptism, is the mature profession of faith prior to receiving the baptism by water. The believer, typically an adult, must consciously choose a life of faith and thereby renounce her or his



previously unclean life. The water washes away the indiscretions of non-belief. Blessedness and God's favor wash over the erstwhile sinner so that she or he may continue on the path toward the Kingdom of God. The documentary's slip of signification, exchanging "Regent Park" for "Regent's Park," interestingly opens up the space, the people, and the unwashedness of Oak Street to the cleanliness and conscious moral conviction evident in *Farewell Oak Street's* emphasis on the clean practices of the new residents. That the old ways are no good, that everything in Regent Park is clean, including the people, nicely opens the space and its discourse to a narrative of hygiene combined with moralistic practice and even to Divine benevolence.

Indeed, for at least a decade and a half following the development's 1949 construction, Regent Park occupied a position of pride within the imaginary of Toronto. Media reports extolled the new residents' love of the place. The May 2, 1950 *Globe and Mail* ran a headline on page 2, "New Apartment Called Heaven" ("About Regent Park," n.d) (again invoking the theme of Divine absolution); and Hugh Garner himself praised the development in a 1957 edition of *Saturday Night*: "When you ask a person living in Regent Park what his reaction is to his new home over his old, he looks at you as if you're either crazy or joking" ("About Regent Park," n.d). Regent Park functioned as a kind of symbolic repository for a post-War Toronto, brimming with optimism and new opportunity. The fact that the development came in \$6 million over budget did not seem to matter ("About Regent Park," n.d). These were heady times, and Regent Park represented the kind of goodwill project that prosperous Toronto and Canada admired in these heydays of Canada's liberal welfare state. The official institutions and their

statistics agreed. Police reported far fewer arrests in the area, and the government collected far more taxation revenues as well ("About Regent Park," n.d).

However, when *Farewell Oak Street*, itself a text brimming with post-War optimism, was released in 1954, many of the residents resented their depiction as slum dwellers. Their resentment seems fair, even today. People did not want to see the old Oak Street; people did not want to see themselves in the old district or it in themselves. These images were not what people wanted to see. People liked Regent Park, though. They liked seeing themselves in it and it in themselves.

However, the honeymoon of this marriage of optimism, prosperity, goodwill, and modernizing hygiene ended. By the 1960s, media accounts began to reflect a shifting mood. By this time, support for such large-scale projects had begun to dwindle. Property owners in surrounding areas no longer wanted new public-housing neighbours, and thinking about planning for public housing began to evolve concomitantly ("About Regent Park," n.d). In the 1960s, the perception emerged that Regent Park was a repository for social problems. At first, public accounts criticized the institutional nature of the development and how it was not a genuine "community." A movement of resident activism emerged in a number of resident groups in order to press the administration to develop more community and recreation facilities, as well as to take a more active role in maintenance and upkeep. However, the shifting imaginary of Regent Park changed even more: It began to be seen as a place of crime, especially.

The imaginary of Regent Park is a space and site of contestation. Debates occur regularly in Toronto's editorial pages. Some see the development today as little more than a site of crime, drugs, and other social problems. However, Regent Park has a very

active and vibrant community. Many residents declare that the place is not nearly as bad as media accounts portray, and that, in fact, the perpetuation of stereotypes causes such negative impressions ("Rebuilding Regent," n.d.).

In some respects, Regent Park is as a small town set in the middle of Toronto and is home to numerous active, multicultural communities. It has a rich tradition and strong network of community activism and leadership and is quite vocal in articulating its interests. Granted, problems exist in Regent Park, as they do in any neighborhood of Toronto or other cities. However, active people are working to create positive opportunities for children and youth as well as a rich culture. Regent Park has (as of June 2004) community centers, sports teams, recreation facilities, a newspaper, a radio station, and a website.

### **The Regent Park Redevelopment Plan**

Notwithstanding the rich community and positive aspects within Regent Park, a growing discourse around the development is creating a narrative plotted from the admitted negative aspects of life in Regent Park today. Years of neglect have allowed problems to creep in, such as cockroaches. Ironically, Regent Park has come to occupy a narrative space similar to that of the old Oak Street. Regent Park is now seen as a hygienic problem for the civic body of Toronto. This problem must be cleansed. This problem must be cleaned. Like the previous Oak Street, today (June 2004), 55 years after initial construction began on Regent Park, and 50 years from the release of the proudly exalting *Farewell Oak Street*, Regent Park is slated for the same fate as the old



Cabbagetown. Regent Park is to be razed, and a new development is to be built on the land.

This solution sounds familiar. Back in 1949, when the problems of Cabbagetown and Oak Street came to be too much to ignore, the city endeavored upon the same course. The discourse of the Regent Park redevelopment bears some similar aspects. As Lorne Greene said in *Farewell Oak Street*, the housing was substandard, as was life on Oak Street. A strong aspect of the narrative surrounding the razing of Oak Street and building of Regent Park was the implication of the physical environment in the substandard life for the residents of the area.

On Oak Street, the problems had two aspects. The first concerned the general decrepitude of the structures. There were holes in windows and verminous contamination everywhere. Both Regent Park and the narratives informing the call to redevelop it recall this aspect of Oak Street. Granted, the modern Regent Park has structural problems as well. The cause of the decrepitude and infestations stem from years of neglect.

(Logically, a similar problem caused the decline of the old Oak Street.) This relationship between decrepitude and neglect brings out an important theme in the discourse. Who is to blame, who is responsible? Who shirked their duties? A critical view would blame the landlord; another would blame the tenants. In *Farewell Oak Street*, this type of blame is not explicitly assigned to either landlords or tenants. Implicitly, however, the film blames the tenants. The major focus on the new, clean attitudes, the clean persons, and the clean apartments, suggesting new attitudes and practices coming with the new buildings, begs the question "What were the attitudes and practices on Oak Street?" The implication is that the tenants themselves were responsible for Oak Street's decrepit conditions. The

film does not mention absentee or neglectful landlords shirking their responsibilities to maintain housing fit for human habitation. Moreover, nothing is said of the responsibility of the civic authorities to ensure that landlords maintain livable housing conditions. The entire enterprise is framed in terms of, after the implication of the CBC journalist's misidentification of Regent Park as "Regent's Park" ("Rebuilding Regent," n.d.), the Oxford centre for training Baptist ministers, a washing away of past sins and a fresh start, a clean slate, the state of morally being born again.

In addition, the enterprise is framed in terms of architectural modernization. The problems on the street are framed as a hygienic problem, one subtly implicating the residents themselves, whom the film suggests were responsible for their own dirtiness. However, the problems on Oak Street were more complex than simply hygiene. After all, the film frames Oak Street in terms of all its attendant social problems: "Down came Oak Street, down came the verminous walls, the unclean, unhealthy rooms, and down came the fire hazards, the juvenile delinquency, the drunkenness, the broken marriages...." (1953). Thus, hygiene signifies the social problems. Moreover, if the tenants are responsible for their hygiene shortcomings, they are also responsible for their other social problems. Suggesting an alternative explanation for the problems—the poverty and general inequality in Canada—is not a radical leap. The film itself raises the spectre of such an explanation: "We're an expanding nation. We build fabulous structures to house machines, and motors, and assembly lines. We raise up mountainous shelters for commerce and finance, but we can't give Jim Brown a good home he can afford...that is to say, we couldn't...." (1953). Indeed, the discourse collapses into one of architectural modernization, into one of the improper use of residential space. After all, according to

the film's logic, the fundamental problem of life on Oak Street was a misuse of design/use scenarios. The house that the nineteen people lived in on *Farewell Oak Street* was never designed for six families. Therefore, the problem was one of improper use. Therefore again, the solution will be to bridge that gap, redesign the space, and thereby, according to the logic, eliminate the problems.

This connection between design and use is evident in the discourse about the Regent Park redevelopment plan today. The planners cite the incidence of crime in Regent Park as informing the need to raze the entire development and rebuild it into something new ("Rebuilding Regent," n.d.). Regent Park was designed by the brightest architects of the time back in 1949, who built it according to a British model known as the "garden city model." Here, the design moves away from traditional street grids. Instead, it distributes homes throughout a flowing green space—like a park or urban garden. Modern critics contend that this design now contributes to crime in the place. Regent Park resists surveillance because it is off the street. Because of these tucked-away corners, as well as the, at the time, non-secure buildings, the argument goes that the area became a magnet for drug dealers and other purveyors of criminal activity. Here, unsavory elements could ply their trade without the encumbrance of surveillance by police and other authorities. Thus, as the argument suggests, a culture of crime developed in Regent Park in no small part due to its design and the disconnect between that design to the lived realities of the inhabitants.

This line of thinking does not consider other possible causes, such as poverty, for the social problems in Regent Park. Design and urban-design solutions become a repository for solution-oriented thinking and a site for public policy intervention into



social problems. This pattern was evident in 1949 during the initial construction of Regent Park and is still evident today in the discourse about its redevelopment. In a persistent narrative of architecturally mediated hygienic modernization, these social problems become cast as hygiene problems; and the solution is to wash them all away, allowing the community to begin again freshly washed of its filth, clean, and ready to begin anew. *This type of architectural intervention has occurred elsewhere in Canada. In the fall of 2000 ("Sheshatshiu," 2000), when young people in Davis Inlet reached the national consciousness because of inhalant abuse and suicide, the public outrage was pervasive. The solution, as we have seen before, involved building an entirely new "community," entirely new structures costing 152 million dollars, and moving the people into them for a clean, fresh start ("Warm House," 2002). However, in 2002, the long-term prognosis for the solution was uncertain ("Innu Fear," 2002), and, by 2005, many of the old problems were again evident ("New Homes," 2005).*

For now, however, in Toronto, the persistent narrative of modernizing hygiene, of washing away the old and creating something new remains a powerful repository for Canadian dreams of a New Day. The narrative is doubly haunted by the desirable and the undesirable. On April 6, 2004, Her Excellency, the Right Honourable Adrian Clarkson, Governor General of Canada, visited Regent Park. Interviewed by the community radio station, she commented that Regent Park is a blueprint for the potential of a modern multicultural Canada: "Regent Park as a model is the way we have to understand Canada is going to become" (Clarkson, 2004). Even as Regent Park itself is being cleaned, it presents an example of vibrant diversity. Certain racist Canadian imaginaries would consider Regent Park's mixture of cultures and languages "unclean." However, Regent

Park's contemporary unhygienic nature, itself, haunts with the potential to wash away the of such intolerance and misunderstanding in the broader Canada.

### Conclusion

The classic NFB film 1953's *Farewell Oak Street* gives an account of the razing of a part of old Cabbagetown and its rebuilding as the modern, first major public housing project in Canada. The film, generally informed by an evolving, if persistent, modernizing concept of "hygiene," provides an opening into haunting narratives surrounding the old Oak Street and Cabbagetown. The narrative, viewing social problems as a kind of hygienic filth, holds the people themselves directly culpable. The narrative does not implicate broader societal causes such as the operation of Capital. Moreover, the public policy intervention aligned with the narrative is that of design and architecture. In 1949, the old Oak Street was demolished and in its place was built the new Regent Park. The structures themselves were seen to be the cause of the inhabitants' inability to break out of a non-hygienic squalour and live clean lives. Today, design is also implicated in social problems in Regent Park. Its lack of street grids, for example, is seen to be the cause of violence, crime, and drug use. A similar solution emerges from the narrative, namely, that the entire network of structures should be demolished in order to build something new. The thinking holds that the new buildings will bring a new way of social being, for as the old buildings go down, so will the old social problems disappear. This bringing together of the disconnect between design and use will supposedly eliminate the social problems (while eliding any blame of broader social and economic factors). What will happen? What will be the state of things 50 years from

now, a half-century hence? Obviously, no one today has the answer to that question. Clearly, we hope that the community will have fewer problems, but, of course, only time will tell if the narrative of modernizing hygiene will persist and perhaps evolve into a new form with a new, if similar, set of problems, manifesting once again, a cleanliness far from Godliness.



(Farewell Oak Street, n.d.)



## Chapter Six: Churchill's Island Opens to Instabilities in Bush's "War on Terror"

*"No man is an island entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main."*

John Donne (2004), "Meditation XVII"



(Churchill's Island, n.d.)

This chapter compares and contrasts a classic NFB documentary, *Churchill's Island* (Legg, 1941), with media representations and articulations of George W. Bush's "War on Terror." I develop the concept of "Islanding" as a generative idea with implications for thinking about curriculum. Systems of thought and patterns of knowledge create illusions of distance between people and curriculum. Intellectual islanding inheres a dangerous tendency that separates and alienates people and ideas from each other and manifests itself in curriculum. Subject areas are partitioned into familiar categories: Social Studies, Mathematics, Language Arts, Physical Education, Music, and so forth. Islanding also separates the learner herself from the subject, teacher, and other learners.

Related to islanding in broader conceptions, many people in North America struggle with real connections to global violence, whether concerning the so-called "War on Terror," the conflict in Iraq, patterns of global debt and struggle, HIV/AIDS, or diaspora and displacement. However, many others live in fragile complacency. In North America, the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks initiated a jolt—but for how long? Slavoj Zizek

(2002) has written that the attacks, the moments of impact and collapse of the buildings, the souls leaping to their deaths, announced a rupture: they announced a challenge to "islands" of North American thought. Žizek suggests that North America thought of itself as somehow separate, partitioned off by shorelines both literal and figurative from the world of consequences. For Žizek, the events of September 11 presented an opportunity for some North Americans to recognize the limits and failures of islanding. However, many retreated further into their ideologies.

In the documentary film *The Corporation* (Abbott & Achbar, 2003), Michael Moore recounts a story suggesting echoes of Marxian alienation. He explains that both he and his partner grew up in Michigan families relying on employment in manufacturing for the auto industry. As the film depicts a derelict car rusting underwater, Moore relates how neither he nor his partner considered that their lives were connected to the burning of untold amounts of fossil fuels, slowly harming the atmosphere, the environment, and long-term habitability of the planet. In a sense, Moore and his partner existed on islands, *apparently* safe, secure, and separate from the world.

To be fair, very good reasons for islanding can exist. I find evidence of islanding for safety in the Academy Award-winning *Churchill's Island* (Legg, 1941), a World War II Allied propaganda film. The picture hails from the days when John Grierson's National Film Board of Canada was arguably the Commonwealth's top producer of the genre. The film paints a wartime portrait of Britons uniting across class and gender boundaries to function as a defense/production/military organism. The film shows Britain as an island, which, of course, it is, but also shows it as a psychological island. Churchill's Island

holds back Britain's enemies, protecting its shores against the rising tide from the continent.

The tendency to island was not new in 1941, nor was concern about it. In 1624, metaphysical poet John Donne (2004) cautioned against such thinking. Today's "War on Terror," a conflict fundamentally different from WW II, and North America's stated need for "homeland security" illustrate that the urge to island is stronger than ever. In Canada, the Federal government's recently released blueprint for the future of foreign policy clarifies that the Department of National Defence's current purpose is to shift from a focus on international peacekeeping toward guarding Canada as a front against terrorism:

To carry out these activities, the Canadian Forces will re-examine their entire approach to domestic operations. In the past, Canada has structured its military primarily for international operations, while treating the domestic role as a secondary consideration. At home, the military's response has been to assemble a temporary force drawn from existing structures designed for other purposes, using the resources immediately available to the local commander. Clearly, this approach will no longer suffice. (National Defence, 2005)

The shift in policy represents a retreat from global connectedness and reaching-out toward homeland security-oriented islanding.

A difference exists between the islanding logic of *Churchill's Island* and the way the "Bush 41" administration functions to deploy "islanding" in the so-called "War on Terror." One point that the administration carefully articulated, especially in the early days after 9/11, was that the 'War on Terror' is a new kind of war ("Rice: Terrorism,"



2001). Indeed, a fundamentally different logic is at play in the "War on Terror" and WWII but not in the same way the Bush administration's articulations suggest.

Jacques Derrida (1997) presents a useful theoretical framework to rethink islanding. As I discuss in Chapter Three, Derrida addresses the problems and instabilities of friendship as thinkers have considered it since the time of Aristotle. In *Politics of Friendship*, Derrida explores 10 engagements with an address attributed to Aristotle, "O my friends, there is no friend" (p. 1). Through the apparent contradiction of addressing members of a category only to announce the category as empty, Derrida moves through permutations of the friend/enemy distinction, of that distinction's either/or logic, to allude to a both/and possibility that points toward a new kind of friendship. In the end, Derrida expands the notion of friendship and illustrates how it forms the basis of political life and an emergent democracy. The work concludes without conclusion: "O my democratic friends..." (p. 306). Unlike Aristotle, Derrida leaves the statement open, incomplete, unconcluded. He leaves it hanging, pointing, and promising forward. This idea presents a hopeful way to think of relational possibilities beyond islanding.

The intellectual tendency to island is undesirable. It separates and alienates people from their ethical obligation to others. The significance for curriculum is that islanding also emerges in curriculum and encourages islanded subjects to isolate themselves from a denigrated and separate world—a process that reinforces binary conceptions of Western metaphysics. The partitioning logic of islanding can include large groups and even nations, but knowledge can island as well, drawing bordering shores around intellectual classifications, conceptual frameworks, and disciplinary boundaries. Our current world calls upon curriculum practitioners and scholars to examine these processes critically.

### *Churchill's Island*

In those fateful autumn days of 1940 when none knew what terror the skies might hold, there appeared from end to end of Britain the strangest fighting force the world has ever seen, an army of citizens, self-organized, self-disciplined. Their armament? Hoses, stirrup pumps, sand bags, brooms, and buckets. Their purpose, to save their town, their city, their community from the fate of Rotterdam and Warsaw. (Legg, 1941)

These words are from the narration for *Churchill's Island* (Legg, 1941). It is not a British film, as one may imagine, but is, in fact, an early effort of the National Film Board of Canada, an example of one of its Wartime "patriotic" (National Film Board of Canada, 2003) films.

I come to this documentary through my own history's connection with the Canadian military. Both my parents were members of the Canadian Armed Forces, which is where they met. As a child, I grew up on Armed Forces bases across Canada. My family lived in what were called "Private Married Quarters" (PMQs). PMQs were base housing units and the sites of admittedly transient but strangely integrated communities. The transience came from the fact that families moved quite often due to the nature of military life. However, integration emerged as all were bound by the same dynamic. I attended a new school almost every year of my childhood. Nonetheless, I often experienced a sweet sense of return upon sharing classes with friends across years and miles.

The decade was the 1970s and a time of relative peace for the Canadian military. This institution remained positively haunted by a spirit of Lester Pearson's peacekeeping

ethos but, mercifully, by relatively few missions. Unlike the very active years of the 1990s and beyond, the 1970s were very quiet and safe for Canadian military personnel. Nonetheless, war haunted my imaginary and, I think, that of my friends. We played games of war almost every day. We visited war museums and monuments. We watched war movies. We collected war facts. World War II occupied ground zero for our imaginations. *Churchill's Island* speaks to and reminds me of that dynamic. The film fuels a sense of whom I was as a child and, by extension, of whom I am as an adult.

Upon the NFB's inception in 1939, the burgeoning agency barely had time to produce its first film, by the same director as that of *Churchill's Island*, *The Case of Charlie Gordon* (Legg & Badgley, 1939)—an inspiring tale of unemployed youth joining the mainstream workforce through cooperation between government officials in the Labor Department and local employers—before the War broke in September and gave the NFB a new reason for being. During the War years, the Board became the Commonwealth's primary producer of War-related propaganda. *Churchill's Island* itself was perhaps Canada's most successful film of the period, winning the Academy Award in 1942 for Best Documentary.

Although the film is called "*Churchill's Island*," Winston Churchill himself is hardly mentioned or depicted. However, in a number of speeches made before the House of Commons in the time shortly before the film was produced, the British Prime Minister foreshadowed the film's themes concerning the War:

How long it will be, how long it will last, depends upon the exertions, which we make on this island. An effort, the like of which has never been seen in our records, is now being made. Work is proceeding night and day. Sundays and



weekdays, Capital and labor have cast aside their interests, rights and customs and put everything into the common stock. Already the flow of munitions has leaped forward. (Churchill, 1940)

Indeed, the film treats the unified, cooperative efforts of the British people to work together to protect their island from attack. In the film's representation, social difference and conflict are elided for the sake of the War effort. In a key scene early in the film, the narration proceeds:

Behind the armored shorelines, 40 million people are at their battle stations. These are Britain's craftsmen, the steel puddlers, foundry men, machinists, the men and women who in time of peace made England rich and strong, and they it is who have brought about the silent wartime revolution, which demands that nothing shall hinder the fulfillment of the nation's needs. Willingly, they have faced the sacrifices, discomfort, hard rations, long hours, for they know that the hosts across the sea are massing. Every hour is precious. (Legg, 1941)

The narration rises in passionate crescendo and accompanies the diegetic rumble of machines doing their work and preparing for war as the scene reveals recently manufactured bombs. The sequence ends with a shot of the work-place sign:

The Hour is Striking!

Non-stop attacks in continuous moves are being directed against our Arts and Shipping.

Jump to it... Keep at it!

Hours lost mean lives lost. (1941)

The focus of the film is macro. If individual perspectives are sought or considered at all, such as in brief interviews with soldiers or sailors to get their opinion on "Jerry," these perspectives are used only to support the overall thesis of social cohesion. The film depicts the selfless efforts of Britain's industrial workers, volunteer firefighters, and all branches of the Armed Services. *Churchill's Island* mentions the "people's" or "citizen's army" three times. The film mentions the personal sacrifices individual Britons make and paints a picture of unwavering strength and readiness for war: "With every passing hour, this island fortress of Churchill and his people grows more formidable...[within the people, across Britain] lies an inner strength, a stubborn calm, which bomb and fire and steel cannot pierce" (1941). The film ends with a formidable cannon pointing across the Channel toward the continent as narrator Lorne Green declares, "They stand unconquered as they have stood down a thousand years of history, and still they throw their challenge across those 20 miles of water: Come, if you dare!" (1941).

Although *Churchill's Island* depicts an island, surrounded by sea and separated from the continent geographically, this film resonates with John Donne's famous line from Meditation XVII: "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main" (Donne, 2004). On the continent, the fall of France and the other countries of continental Europe has an immediate bearing upon the fortunes and fears of Britain. As the film argues, the fate of Britain has both a symbolic and real importance to the wider defenses against Germany's aggression. In this sense, Churchill's island has a somewhat porous character. It is open to both dangers and assistance from without. It receives much support from North America and, indeed, from across the

Commonwealth. Assistance comes from Canada and the USA in the form of ships, supplies, and soldiers.

The porous nature of Churchill's island affects other nations. Dangers to North American ships hazarding German U-boats in the Atlantic and beyond directly affect the fortunes of those countries: "And woe betide the ship attempting to run the gauntlet of the Atlantic alone. Be she Allied, be she neutral, the fact that her course is set towards British shores is enough to seal her fate" (Legg, 1941). A hapless ship is ruthlessly torpedoed and sunk as a shrinking, burning mass in the chill, violent waters of the Atlantic—"All that is left is a group of half-frozen, oil-smeared men, and a lifeboat lurching in the green troughs of the sea" (1941). The film also notes the "sinkings in the south Atlantic, off West Africa and the Cape Verde Islands, sinkings between the Azores and the Caribbean, between Greenland and Iceland, sinkings in the waters of the western hemisphere—within 700 miles of Canada!" (1941). In this sense, the argument emerges that the dangers to Churchill's island, concomitant with the porous nature of the island, also threaten far beyond her shores.

*Churchill's Island's* representation of social unity haunts with elisions of social difference, inequality, and conflict. The film acknowledges that in times of peace, the workers made Britain rich and strong. However, the statement elides class difference and antagonism by not acknowledging the extraction of the surplus value of those workers' labour, which, arguably, while it went to make Britain rich and strong, did not make all Britons equally rich and strong. Certainly, the owners of Capital benefited more. The statement does not acknowledge labor struggles, such as the history of child labor; Bloody Sunday, February 13, 1887, in which police attacked Social Democratic



Federation members as they tried to meet in Trafalgar Square; the Match Girl Strike of 1888 in which the women who worked at the Bryant & May match factory protested poor pay, company fines, and poisoning by the use of phosphorus to manufacture the matches; the London dock workers strike of 1889, inspired by the women at Bryant and May; and the 1926 general strike, which culminated in repressive anti-labour legislation by the British Government—1927's Trade Disputes and Trade Union Act, forbidding, among other things, sympathetic strikes and mass picketing.

In addition, the macro perspective, the War's-eye view of *Churchill's Island*, is also blind to other social differences. Certainly, women are mentioned. They served along the same workbench or sometimes in the same citizens' brigades as men, and, in that sense, women's representation, such as it is, suggests a kind of equality with their male counterparts. However, especially in the early 1940s, the lot of women in Britain was far from equal to that of men. Thus, women's inclusion in the apparently harmonious aggregate of Wartime Britain elides challenges to women in relation to Patriarchy. While women are at least depicted in *Churchill's Island*, other groups do not fare even that well. The film denotes virtually nothing of racial diversity, but *Churchill's Island* is not completely blind to racial or cultural difference. The film suggests a curious play of the kind of cultural assumptions behind Nazi State Racism, by pointing out apparently essential characteristics of Germans. While the signification avoids overt reference to race, or even culture, the film does comment about the German high command planning "with all the patient foresight of their kind" (1941), as we see some frantic, meticulously well-groomed officers examining microfiche with magnifying lenses. The film does not clarify if "their kind" refers to the German wartime planners or simply Germans in

general. However, the lack of clarification certainly feeds into and supports a Commonwealth gaze upon a sort of identifiable, unified German Other represented by what is analogous to racial or cultural characteristics. Thus, racial difference is irrelevant to British unity but relevant to its relationship to the Other. In addition, the film says nothing of differences in sexual orientation, religion, or other markers. At the level of cultural inscription, *Churchill's Island*'s unity in the face of the Wartime threat "unifies" out legitimate differences.

### **"Bush's Island" and the "War on Terror"**

Statements of social unity in Bush's "War on Terror" are deployed very differently than in *Churchill's Island*. After 9-11, Bush explicitly admonished the world, "Over time it's going to be important for nations to know they will be held accountable for inactivity. You're either with us or against us in the fight against terror" ("Bush Says," 2001). In contrast, *Churchill's Island* presents a binary simply consisting of the Germans and the residents of Churchill's porous island, including its supporters from the rest of the Commonwealth and the USA. Dissension on Churchill's island is not treated; dissension on "Bush's Island" has a history of being continuously attempted, and, likewise, continuously attacked by the administration and its supporters. In the lead-up to the U.S. invasion of Iraq, much debate occurred. However, dissenting views required careful framing. The suggestion was that anyone who questioned the President or his policies was somehow against the American troops. Even the most cursory glance at letters to editors or Internet discussion groups will find this view virulently articulated.

"Not supporting the troops" emerged as the cardinal sin, the one thing that no one was allowed to articulate.

Of course, this issue has a history in American military policy. It is widely considered that media accounts of the war in Vietnam helped to fuel anti-war sentiment and thereby to undermine public opinion and the political will to carry out the war. The U.S. military understood this lesson well, as the media have never again enjoyed unrestricted access to a war zone. Even in World War II, journalists had to have their stories reviewed by censors, and in some cases, stories were not allowed to run, but the stories still existed, and were available to form the historical record. In American conflicts since Vietnam, media access has been tightly controlled, and historic records have not been given a chance to emerge. Thus, a very limited picture of American wartime activities has ensued.

Today, one is not permitted to question "the troops"—by questioning the President's policies, one also questions the troops and, indeed, somehow condemns them. However, those whom the soldiers kill or wound in their campaigns, which, of course, stand beyond reproach, are not considered. In the fallout from the American "interrogation" activities at Abu Ghraib prison, the incriminating pictures did not come from the media, but from U.S. soldiers themselves. Politicians argued that the photos should not be published, claiming that they would stir up more hatred toward Americans in the Muslim world. Others argued that the authorities should release the pictures, not in the interests of full disclosure or honesty and reconciliation, but rather, for the politically expedient purpose of avoiding future inconvenient episodes as they surfaced clandestinely. Others argued in the same vein that other pictures inevitably would



emerge, so the authorities should release all of them now (Henry, Johns, Barrett, & Turnham, 2004). Haunting echoes of Vietnam cry out.

Indeed, in the fallout of Abu Ghraib, ideology reveals itself. All of the outrages, the torturing of the Iraqi detainees, as well as all of the military mishaps since the beginning of the Bush administration, beginning with the surfacing submarine that hit a Japanese ship, killing 9 civilians including 4 high school students ("U.S. Sub Collides," 2001), to the deaths of 4 Canadian servicemen on April 18, 2002 in Afghanistan ("Canada Launches Inquiry," 2002), to the massacre at an Afghan wedding party ("Scores Killed," 2002), to the civilians killed by American bombs and military activities in Iraq ("Death in the Desert," 2004), are seen as aberrations in a "sanitized," "managerial" conception of the war. The line from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* by Marc Antony, "Cry 'havoc,' and let slip the dogs of war" (2001, 3.1.275) seems lost on Bush and his advisers, including Cheney, Wolfowitz, and Perle. Administrative, bureaucratic, military "management" tries to create the illusion that events like those listed above can be avoided, but they remain the sure effects of war. If they were not, then surely the commanders would not need to control the media's access to the war so strictly. Regardless, even with restricted access, pictures such as those from Abu Ghraib still make it through the cracks. Thus, *Churchill's Island* manifests social unity, while Bush's Island struggles to contain its disunity.

In the days leading up to the American invasion of Iraq, people filled streets all over the world, protesting against the unilateralism of the action ("Millions say 'No,'" 2003). Bush chided the UN: "Will the United Nations serve the purpose of its founding or will it be irrelevant?" ("Bush's UN," 2002), threatening unilateral action unless Iraq

ended its weapons programs. On November 8, 2002, the UN issued Resolution 1441 authorizing inspections ("UN Adopts," 2002). However, impatient with inspections of Iraq's weapon-manufacturing plants, Bush gave Saddam 48 hours to leave Iraq or face invasion ("Bush Ultimatum," 2003). Inevitably, the American-led coalition attacked, on March 20, 2003: "Explosions are heard in Baghdad, 90 minutes after President Bush's deadline for Saddam Hussein to go into exile or face war expires" ("Timeline," 2003). Dissent did not matter. The only unity Bush apparently needed was the "unity" of his own rationale and any other of the "coalition of the willing" that would join him. Indeed, unity on "Bush's Island" was very different from the unity on Churchill's island. Bush's unity could not contain the disunity, whether in public debate, through the media, international opinion, or the illusions of a bureaucratic, managerial style of warfare.

The borders of "Bush's Island," both the geographical borders as well as the imaginary borders, like those portrayed in *Churchill's Island*, are porous, but porous and dispersed. As a "new kind of war" ("Rice: Terrorism," 2001), the "War on Terror" has no clearly defined front where each side meets, aware of the presence and intentions of the other. Rather, the front line in the "War on Terror" can be anywhere. It can be, indeed, in the heart of New York City, Kenya ("Statement," 2002), Saudi Arabia and Morocco ("Video Claims," 2003), Madrid ("Madrid Bombing," 2004), Afghanistan (Garrett and King, 2001) or, as the Bush administration asserted, Iraq ("Bush: Iraq, al Qaeda linked," 2003).

Nevertheless, the porous nature of Bush's borders differs from that of Churchill's borders in terms of the nations' relationships with neighbours and allies. A fundamentally different logic is at play. In *Churchill's Island*, most of continental Europe has fallen to

the Axis powers, and only Britain has not been overcome by the German aggression. In the case of "Bush's Island," strong claims were made that the whole world was being attacked:

The events in New York and Washington on September 11, 2001 were not just an attack on America and Americans. The World Trade Center bombing claimed victims from some 80 nations — from our close neighbors Canada and Mexico to countries as far away as Australia and Zimbabwe, and large numbers from Britain, India, and Pakistan. For many countries, including ours, this attack claimed the lives of the largest numbers of their citizens in a terrorist incident. These terrorist attacks may have been conceived as a blow against America but in reality they were attacks against all civilized people. (Taylor, 2001)

However, the target of the 9-11 attacks arguably was not the world, the non-Islamic world, the non-Islamic-fundamentalist world, or "Western civilization." It was the United States. The attacks were not against Canada or Mexico, the US's neighbours. They were against the United States. In the attacks subsequent to 9-11 and Bush's "War on Terror," other nations have been targeted. However, they were targeted partly because of their geographical convenience and partly because of their affinity with Bush's "War on Terror." In contrast, Britain in World War II was the lone holdout from conquest among its neighbors. The rhetoric of the "War on Terror" would have everyone believe that a similar if reversed logic occurs: if the United States falls, then who will protect the world, who will protect "civilization?" In a sense, the context of *Churchill's Island* was that it was the lone, tenuous front line of defense in what was properly the world's war; but, in



Bush's "War on Terror," the logic inversely suggests that the world is the tenuous front line of defense in this, what is, arguably, the US's war.

### **Binarism in the "War on Terror's" Islanding**

From the two themes of *Churchill's Island*, social unity in times of war and the porous nature of wartime borders, the present Haunting Inquiry discerns a binarism in Bush's "War on Terror." Bush frames the war in terms of evil and accountability:

We're going to find those evildoers, those barbaric people who attacked our country, and we're going to hold them accountable....we're going to hold the people who house them accountable. The people who think they can provide them safe havens will be held accountable. The people who feed them will be held accountable. ("Bush: bin Laden," 2001)

The war is against the "evildoers" and those who help them. If they are the evildoers, then surely Bush and his allies are fighting with the comfort of transcendent righteousness and with little room for grey areas. In Bush's binary, there are either evildoers or warriors of good. The professed narrative of Bush's "War on Terror," then, is starkly binary. This binary character is certainly inconsistent with the admitted frontless aspect of the war. With a clearly demarcated front line of battle, that type of geographical configuration lends itself to a binary, at least of friend and foe. However, the admittedly disbursed nature of the front line in the "War of Terror" complicates the moral binary that drives it.

The evildoers no longer swell "over there," as George M. Cohan's (1917) WWI song proclaims. They are no longer in their U-boats in the Atlantic or across the English

Channel with guns pointed "our" way. In the complicated geography of Bush's moral binary, the evildoers are among us. The Bush administration's practice of issuing terror alerts further problematizes the border issue. In the time of *Churchill's Island*, citizens could expect to hear an air raid signal if planes were spotted approaching the island from the mainland. However, in the era of Bush's "War on Terror," there are no clear signals of threats such as those of German bombers approaching. Intelligence is secret and, as revealed in the fallout from not discovering weapons of mass destruction after the US's invasion of Iraq, of questionable, if politically charged, value. The Government simply assesses intelligence and issues an order. Moreover, alerts need not demonstrate specificity in terms of the nature of the threat, the target, nor even the timeframe. In May 2004, Attorney General John Ashcroft issued an alert for the entire summer (Arena et al., 2004). The summer correlated with the run-up to the fall American election, when the Bush administration was sinking in the polls as the saga of the Iraqi war became more brutal and the errors of the invasion more obvious.

In the election campaign, the administration strategically positioned itself as the provider of security. Certainly, the Bush administration must have been pleased that Ashcroft's alert, lacking any specificity, was issued at a time when Bush must have wished to reassert his role as the authoritative provider of safety and security. Ashcroft alluded to the case of the Spanish elections after the Madrid bombings: "The Madrid railway bombings were perceived by Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda to have advanced their cause. Al Qaeda may perceive that a large-scale attack in the United States this summer or fall would lead to similar consequences" ("Attorney General John Ashcroft," 2004). Train stations in Madrid were bombed, and many people killed and injured. The

story went that the bombing retaliated for Spain's participation in Bush's coalition of the willing in the invasion of Iraq. Consequently, in a near concomitant election, the Spanish voters ousted the Bush-supporting regime and installed a socialist government, which promptly withdrew Spanish forces from Iraq (Noah, 2004). Ashcroft explicitly invoked these events and seemed to frame political continuity (reelecting Bush) as a patriotic act against terror. In other words, to vote against President Bush would play into the hands of the terrorists, the evildoers.

Such political machinations allude to the divisional nature of the political landscape in America. After the US Supreme Court reversed the earlier Florida Supreme Court decision allowing certain manual recounts and *de facto* handed Bush the presidency, Bush had become, in many respects, the visible face of America all over the world. Politically, the country is very divided—obviously, the 2000 election was the closest in US history. Bush's "War on Terror" divides America against the evildoers in a dispersed war in which the front line can be anywhere in the world, including within the borders of the United States. In terms of Bush's political survival, the Presidential election in November 2004 functioned as a key strategic moment in both the execution of the war and the political fortunes of the Bush administration. In this sense, the "War on Terror" and the Bush administration itself become synonymous. The "War on Terror," in this light, comes to be seen not as a war of America against terror or, indeed, of terror against America, but in its ongoing manifestation, of terror against the Bush administration. The war itself, which early on had served as Bush's most important political asset, has come to function as the wedge to turn America against Bush.



Indeed, "Bush's Island" is fraught with contradiction. Whereas the text of *Churchill's Island*, admittedly with some problems, presented a surface picture of integrated macro unity, commonality of purpose, and a sense of national urgency, a reading of "Bush's Island" can discern a dominant narrative along these lines: Americans are behind their President; their President does what is right, and the entire world is behind America. This implied unity is against the threat of evildoers, and, therefore, the war and the unity of purpose are just. However, ruptures and fissures abound in the narrative. Firstly, America is deeply divided on the issue of the President, for his legitimacy stems from the December 13 2001 Supreme Court edict, the justice of the war, and the success of the war. As the war drags on and its costs become clearer in terms of lives and reputation, many Americans waver in their support ("Poll Finds," 2004). The *a posteriori* difficulty with the war obviously is not the same as "principled" *a priori* opposition to the war, but as it becomes increasingly difficult, much support fades.

Such contradictions go hand in hand with the dispersed nature of borders in the "War on Terror." The front line can be anywhere across the globe, or anywhere within the United States, affecting both the experience of the conflict and the unity of purpose. Deep debates emerge. In the media, any criticism of the war or policies needs to be carefully framed so as not to criticize the troops. The troops become the embodiment or the symbol or signifier of the war itself. The troops become a hegemonic ground zero. In this sense, the "War," especially as it emerges along the dispersed front line inside the United States, takes on the character of an ideological clash, which is played out on the TV screens every night and in the coffee shops across the country, as the hegemonic support for the war (in the form of "support for the troops") is continually reinserted and

reinscribed even in critique. Thus, the troops themselves, as instruments of war, seem safe from critique in the general sense. The ideological constraints serve to keep that terrain partitioned off.

### Conclusion

This Haunting Inquiry into the classic NFB film *Churchill's Island* offers a lens through which to view and discern contradictions of "Bush's Island" and the "War on Terror." The film presents two interesting themes. One involves the remarkable wartime unity, harmony (at least on the side of the Britons), and a singularity of purpose in defending the nation from attack from without. In addition, the film reveals the porous nature of the wartime borders of Britain, in that the hands of help from abroad, specifically from the Commonwealth, Canada, and America, reached from far across the Atlantic to assist Britain. The British erected a fortification against German attack, but it welcomed support from friends. These themes point to the differences between the film and "Bush's Island." First, unity on "Bush's Island" is far from secure (the articulations of unity in *Churchill's Island* were problematic, admittedly), for statements of unity on "Bush's Island" collapse under the disunity that Bush's "us-versus-them" execution of his "War on Terror" engenders. Second, a professed characteristic of the "War on Terror" is that old perceptions of "borders," such as the circumference of the British isles, are cast asunder, for now, the front line can be anywhere in the world. Attacks on Americans or their allies can take place anywhere, even within the United States. Moreover, the theme of dispersed borders further undermines the kind of unity portrayed in *Churchill's Island*. In fact, a pervasive sense of fear and mistrust in tandem with severe ideological

regulation —“If you’re against the war, you must be against the troops”—further contributes to the disunity of “Bush’s Island.”

Haunting Inquiry into islanding opens possibilities beyond ways the “island” has been conceived. The concept of “Island” seems to necessitate a relation of circumscription—an island is an island because it is surrounded. For example, the structure can be surrounded by water. However, as a land mass, an island connects to the Earth below. It does not float freely. The island is one with the Earth beneath. It is connected—solid in its isolation. The merely accidental addition of water to the geography renders the formation an island. It becomes such when a *supplementary* addition (water) isolates it. To access the structure, especially when it is surrounded by deep and vast water, requires a further *supplement*: a boat or other water-faring craft. Part of what makes an island an island is a sense of remoteness, of impassibility, of inaccessibility. This sense of the island mobilizes a logic of ever-increasing supplementarity. However, too much supplementary accessibility can collapse the island’s very status as such. With its accoutrements of bridges and tunnels, one hardly thinks of Manhattan, for example, as an island *per se*. This is a curious observation, even serendipitous. After all, Manhattan itself was the site upon which the unique islanding logic of the “War on Terror” was born. The attacks on the Twin Towers—for the island’s dwellers, for those who appreciated the sense of safety that the island’s “isolation” provided, for “America”—were singularly traumatic. Air travel is, after all, a geography-traversing supplement *par excellence*. The avionic extension of supplementary logic brought down (along with the Twin Towers) the island’s *raison d’être*.



What is the "island's" future, including the "island" as a curricular concept?

Certainly, its shorelines are more accessible than once thought. Efforts toward curricular interdisciplinarity continue. However, ironically, in secondary education, the bastions of disciplinary islanding seem stronger than ever when some retreat further into their islands, even as the "island's" contradictory impossibilities hauntingly persist. For example, even as "high stakes" academic disciplines modify their approaches toward inclusivity and integration (e.g., real world connections for Mathematics and Science), the disciplines remain intact, more islanded than ever. Porousness seems to strengthen them. This chapter's Haunting Inquiry reveals that islands may never have been as islanded as they had seemed to be. Nonetheless, articulations of such islanding remain. Moreover, the more tenuous the island's integrity, the fiercer its defenders bristle when challenged.



(Churchill's Island, n.d.)

## Chapter Seven:

### *Neighbours* Haunts and Troubles the Call to “Love one’s neighbour” as a Cure for War.



(*Neighbours/Voisins*, n.d.)

With a troubling Otherwise, *Neighbours* (McLaren, 1952) haunts notions of the “good neighbour” and provides a valuable way to reconsider notions of “neighbourly love.” Some years ago, I stood in the Princess Theatre, down on Whyte Avenue, in Edmonton, Alberta. I waited in the crowded, hot lobby waiting to purchase popcorn. I knew the movie would start soon, and I needed that popcorn line to get moving. Suddenly, I heard the telltale sound of a short film beginning. I heard the strange electronic music of *Neighbours*. I knew I had about 10 minutes until the main feature started. This occurred around 1989, when the National Film Board of Canada was in the midst of celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This celebration meant that those who attended movies in Canada or watched the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation could often find

themselves inadvertently also viewing films from the NFB's thousands-of-titles-long catalogue. Tonight, our pre-feature was *Neighbours*. I had seen the film many times before, and I would even say (at the time) it was my favourite NFB film. Watching it, even today, gives me a chill, especially during the later, violent part, when the neighbours' self-centredness, panic, desperation, and toxicity burst through the surface friendliness. The neighbours' physical appearance changes, and, even though McLaren used only makeup—obvious makeup—the effect remains potent. It gives me a chill. I said to the person ahead of me in the popcorn line, "*Neighbours* is on." He replied in somewhat of an unneighbourly fashion, "Who cares?"

After having researched and written the present chapter, I learned of the recent publication of *The Neighbor: Three Inquiries in Political Theology* by Slavoj Žižek, Eric Satner, and Kenneth Reinhard (2005). The three authors each contribute a substantial essay reengaging the injunction "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Holy Bible, Leviticus, XIX, 18) as passed down through Freud's (2005) *Civilization and its Discontents*. They meditate upon challenges to neighbourly love in a recent history scarred by genocide, war, and hatred. I find in the three studies a resonance with the present chapter. I identify recognition that the call to neighbourly love is complexly challenging but still salvageable in some form. My study shares a certain contour of that sentiment but differs in that my engagement with the neighbour is primarily influenced by Derrida's (1997) *Politics of Friendship*. Žižek, Satner, and Reinhard explore theological dimensions of the political ethics of the neighbour. Žižek, in particular, employs a grounding psychoanalytic ontology as the anchor of an ethics charging



complicity toward what he identifies as a *postmodern* ethical bankruptcy. Interestingly, Žižek does so through the theological—the *premodern* discourse *par excellence*. My own engagement with the figure of neighbourliness applies the hauntological insights of *Haunting Inquiry*. I acknowledge that haunting inheres its own premodern tendencies, which I regard as part of a field of divergent heterogeneity and not a theological convergence with critical theory.

The benefit of the following reading using the insights of *Haunting Inquiry* allows the film to spur discussion of war, peace, human rights, and global citizenship. This reading also creates a safe space to question the haunting aspects of cherished notions of neighbourliness. *Haunting Inquiry* allows this questioning, this sort of critical engagement, while still mobilizing the film's value as a means to challenge the "inevitability" of war and conflict.

### ***Neighbours and the Neighbourly Otherwise***

Notions of an international neighbourhood have continuously evolved during the Enlightenment emergence of the nation state, the disintegration of the old European Empires, World War II, the Cold War, and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The last 15 years have seen the ascendancy of a singular global superpower, one, especially since 2000, aggressively indifferent to notions of international cooperation. This period has also witnessed optimistic narratives of global interdependency concomitant with the "triumphalism" of liberal democracy and free markets. Despite much buoyant recasting of the global neighbourhood, threats to peace and well-being seem greater than ever. Now is an opportune time to learn what lessons a classic film like *Neighbours* may offer.

*Neighbours* is an Academy Award-winning National Film Board of Canada production, animating two neighbours who each desire a single, errant flower to be on his side of their adjoining properties. Eventually, the two men destroy the flower, themselves, and everything precious to them. The film ends with the advice, in fourteen languages, to "Love your neighbour." *Neighbours* presents a beautiful invocation and an important message about peace and the destructive futility of war. However, use of the film in education for global citizenship, use that involves reimagining the work of the NFB, would dig beneath that invocation to love your neighbour and even problematize some of its ideological commitments. Such commitments help to form the basis for thinking about citizenship, both local and global. Toward that purpose, this chapter interrogates notions of neighbourly love relevant to contemporary global circumstances. This reading rethinks neighbourly love as a basis for educating about human rights and global citizenship and ponders the need for and possibilities of a new kind of neighbourly love upon the horizon.

Produced by the NFB in 1952 and directed by its star animator, Norman McLaren, the film occupies an urgent and ironic place in Canadian culture. Founded in 1939, the NFB barely had time to produce its first film, *The Case of Charlie Gordon* (Legg and Badgley, 1939), before war gave the fledgling film agency a new purpose for being. Arguably, the NFB became the Commonwealth's most significant producer of wartime propaganda, and Norman McLaren was unquestionably the genre's most innovative artist. Perhaps *Neighbours* suggests a kind of penance for such McLaren-directed and -produced World War II propaganda classics as *V for Victory* (1941), *Dollar Dance* (1943), and *Keep your Mouth Shut* (1944).

After the film's neighbours shockingly kill each other and their families, they are buried with a cross and single flower upon their plots. Ironically, in death, there are enough flowers to go around. Curiously, I hear faint echoes of Marx's criticism of religion. By focusing upon an afterlife, we need not fret about our lack of flowers upon this earth; we will have enough of them after death.

However, I do not criticize religion *per se*. Rather, I want to look briefly at the edict to "Love your neighbor," and how it relates to some currently circulating notions of global citizenship. The film appears to hope that if we can all just love each other, if neighbor can love neighbor, then we can avoid the kind of pointless, horrific conflict and destruction the film depicts. Presented, as it is, however, upon the screen in fourteen different languages, the invocation to "Love your neighbor" fails to consider sufficiently *the flower* as either property or *objet a*, object of desire.

We must consider the ways that the call to love thy neighbor naturalizes patterns of property, ownership, and even institutions of war itself. Loving your neighbour can function as a touchstone for organizing narratives around national identity—for generating consent on one side of the fence or the other and mobilizing readiness for war. Admittedly, though, one effect of what many call "globalization," is the collapse of the nation a basic entity of neighborhood. As I pointed out in Chapter Two, Marx and Engels (1998) called upon the workers of the world to unite, but today, the formation to have taken up that call most earnestly seems to be transnational Capital. Education to facilitate new flows of global capital, now predicated not so much upon the Enlightenment idea of the nation state, or the institutions of twentieth-century internationalism, but upon the international trade agreements that increasingly form the legal apparatus of international



relations—education for global citizenship that simply recasts borders and fences farther afield—will not do.

As a child, I grew up on a number of military bases across Canada. Both my parents served as members of the Canadian Armed Forces. My mother was a member only until my younger brother, a year and a half younger than I, was born. My father spent his whole career in the Forces, so I was well-acquainted with the “down-times” of the military. These were the quiet moments between wars. When I was a child, I played war like most boys of my generation. However, as I grew older, I developed a firm conviction that war was the world’s most pressing problem. I felt more than that war was a tragedy. I felt that war, even in self-defense, was unacceptable. I supposed the logic of defense—the Canadian Forces were called the “Department of National Defence”—did not justify what I understood as the chaotic unpredictability of war. Perhaps referring to it as “unpredictable” is wrong. Unimaginable tragedy and the routine injustice of civilian deaths outnumbering those of soldiers undermined the usual arguments for war. Mysterious hauntings of my father linger.

In 1969, Prime Minister Pierre Eliot Trudeau declared to an American audience at the National Press Club that “Living next to you is like sleeping with an elephant; no matter how friendly and even-tempered is the beast, one is affected by every twitch and grunt” (2004). All is fine until our bedfellow decides to roll over. Indeed, the Canadian relationship with the neighbour to the south has been in many ways both a blessing and a

curse. Canadians differ from their neighbours. Differences exist between our cultures (whatever they are) and our histories. Canadian poet Earle Birney wrote scandalously:

“We French, we English, never lost our civil war,  
endure it still, a bloodless civil bore” (Birney, 1964, p. 37).

Once again, the poem concludes: “Its only by our lack of ghosts we’re haunted” (37).

As a Canadian, I remain haunted—haunted by specters seated at empty chairs at almost every table where I sit. I feel haunted by Canada’s southern neighbour. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, after the American War of Independence, colonists loyal to the Crown fled north to the regions of Canada. The United Empire Loyalists journeyed north, reinforcing a distinction between our neighbours to the south and Canada. The popular British soap *Coronation Street* finds an audience on CBC that it does not find in the south. Some Canadian politicians argue for closer relations with our neighbours. However, we have a cultural history and memory both hauntingly entwined and distinct from those of the Republic to the south.

What is a “neighbour,” and how does one become a “good” one? In the Old Testament, the tenth commandment frames neighborly relations in terms of “belongings”: “Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbor’s wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbor’s house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any *thing* that is thy neighbor’s” (*Deuteronomy* 5: 21). Indeed, here, a good neighbour does not covet *his* neighbour’s property.

Canada and the neighbour to the south, obviously, have a long and curious history. In the North American War of 1812, after the American General McClure burnt Newark (Niagara on the Lake) on December 10, 1813, the British commander Sir George

Cockburn made his way to Washington and razed the White House to the ground. In May 1871, Canada initiated the scandal-riddled tendering and construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The Dominion feared that the sparsely populated (at least with colonists) region of western Canada was susceptible to *de facto* claim by the good neighbour to the south. The thinking held that some sort of material claim was required, or else someone, namely the U.S., would take over the Canadian West. Many Canadians maintain similar anxieties concerning the Arctic today. I recall Robert Frost's line from his poem "Mending Wall": "Good fences make good neighbors" (p. 235).

Neighbourliness today is complicated. A number of issues, or in Ottawa-ease, a number of "files," persist. Concerns range from the softwood lumber dispute, to the movement of beef across the border, to the production of Hollywood films in Canada, to the Americans' proposed missile defense shield. These matters elaborate the McLaren film's metaphorical use of the flower, and, as in the film, they vex neighbourliness. These disputes speak of property, wealth, and the muscle to maintain them. The tenth commandment casts good neighbourliness in terms of honouring property. In this sense, the commandment is a call to maintain the status quo: "You keep yours, and I'll keep mine." Here, good neighbourliness maintains existing patterns of social/economic relations.

The film presents both neighbours as relatively homogeneous. Both are male, white, middle-class, and associated with social patterns of heterosexuality—both are presumably married and have infants. The proverbial fly in the ointment is the flower, although it does not represent a basic need for living. Both neighbours seem adequately



clothed, housed, and fed. The flower is an extra, a luxury item of sorts. Certainly, it is beautiful. One sniff of the aroma apparently sends each neighbour into orbits of pleasure (Curious, since the dandelion is also a weed). Therefore, we can think of the flower as "property" without considering it as necessary for sustaining life. Fighting for the flower is not a matter of biological survival. Moreover, each neighbour lives upon green grass and near beautiful trees. Neither neighbour is starved for nature, so what does the flower represent to the neighbours? Why and how does it impel them to such violence and destruction? It winks at signifying *jouissance*.

I think fear plays a role. Some of us act out of fear by creating a narrative of resource scarcity. It is a "narrative," after all. Enough resources exist to feed the world. Patterns of property, ownership, and wealth acquisition prevent comprehensive distribution. Some of us are so consumed by fear through the narrative of resource scarcity that we feel we must accumulate, we must own, we must have the flower on our side of the fence, lest our neighbour take it and we will want in our time of "need."

However, what could impel two homogeneous neighbours to descend violently into a complete breakdown of order and civility over something neither of them really needs for survival? Perhaps, they merely bring to the surface a violence that lay dormant and invisible in the very patterns of neighbourly neighbourliness—the civil, button-down discipline and order of the two men, each uniformed in trousers and tie. Each neighbour has a spouse, "kept" indoors, not outside to enjoy the greenery and fresh air. The women are in the homes, rearing the children. Unstated power relations are present here. The highly disciplined social order in each neighbour's home matches the highly ordered and ritualized pattern of relations between the two men. Each sits in his respective lawn chair,

each reads his respective newspapers—each paper with tautologous, if complementary headlines: “War Certain if no Peace” “Peace Certain if no War.” Their world seems governed by a ruthless dichotomy of either/or, of bifurcating certainty. “War Certain if no Peace” “Peace Certain if no War.” The logic of their media world simply reflects the logic of their neighbourliness. “I am me if I am not my neighbour” “I am my neighbour if I am not me.” Of course, however, the second proposition makes no sense. It is not logical. It is incompatible with received reason. I cannot be my neighbour. I cannot be the speaking subject of that statement (if it is true). The terms of the argument forbid its possibility of being true. There is I, and there is my neighbour. My neighbour or I cannot be both. We cannot live on both sides of the property line. None of us, as integrated, Enlightenment political subjects, can stand on both sides of the line. Sure, we could straddle the divide, each leg hoisted over onto either side. Alas, however, we would not be whole. We would not be either our neighbour or ourselves. We would be somehow mutually both. The old categories of “neighbour” and “I” would no longer be distinct, discreet, whole, or integrated. The same goes for the flower. One whole flower cannot grow on both sides of the property line. The whole flower cannot belong wholly to each neighbour at the same time, especially if each neighbour is whole himself. The flower dissolves into plural indistinctiveness if seen as Nothing, void, *objet a*, like Žižek’s (1993) Nation Thing—a spectre of inauthenticity haunting assertions of authentic national identity.

*Romans* 13: 9 speaks of neighbourly relations, but adds a dimension of reflexivity: “For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not

steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Thou shalt love the Other as the self. Thou shalt love the object as the subject.

Neighbourliness becomes complicated in contemporary global times. It is no secret that many within the Bush administration and even some in this country would have liked very much to see Canadian troops as part of U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's "mother of all coalitions" (Rhem, 2002). One of Jean Chrétien's last pronouncements as Prime Minister declared that Canada would not participate in the U.S. invasion or occupation of Iraq. This decision provided the most fruitful applause line at Chrétien's farewell ceremony in Toronto's Air Canada Centre on November 13, 2003. If neighbours help neighbours, was Canada being a "good" neighbour in refusing to go along with the invasion? After all, to believe the rhetoric promoting the war, America's direct safety was apparently at stake. Good neighbourliness becomes complicated with the introduction of a third object. In other words, the measure of good neighbourliness, apparently, is to love thy neighbour as thyself, but what happens when a third neighbour emerges? What of Iraq and its people? On Oct. 29, 2004, an article in the British medical journal *The Lancet* by researchers from Johns Hopkins University, Columbia University, and the Al-Mustansiriya University in Baghdad estimated that 100,000 Iraqis had died so far in the war and that "[m]ost individuals reportedly killed by coalition forces were women and children." ("War Killed," 2004). What of our "neighbours" in Iraq? What of Canadians' neighbourly ethical responsibility to love them as ourselves? According to the



U.S. rhetoric, Saddam actively pursued weapons of mass destruction and harboured *mal* intent toward America. According to that reasoning, a case for invasion seemed plausible (although U.N. Resolution 1441 provided a mechanism to inspect Iraq for WMD evidence and enforce Iraqi compliance, thereby weakening the case for a U.S.-led initiative). In fact, Saddam did not possess the reputed WMDs. Therefore, Iraq was not an immediate threat to the U.S.. The U.S. was wrong. Canada's close neighbour was mistaken. Our ethical duty, then, was to the people of Iraq. Our ethical duty was to do what we could to prevent the bloodshed and slaughter of 100,000 people—many of whom were children.

However, the scenario is obviously far from simple. The WMD argument is merely one of many marshaled in support of the invasion. Hardly anyone disputes that Saddam was a ruthless dictator, and, in that sense, harmful to the Iraqi people. Therefore, another argument is that the U.S. had an ethical, even a neighbourly obligation to overthrow Saddam and help usher in democracy to Iraq. According to that thinking, the U.S. must certainly be a good neighbour *extraordinaire* to have gone to Iraq's "aid" unilaterally, snubbing the United Nations and most of the world community. However, the invade-Iraq-to-save-it argument is not clear-cut. The online satirical publication *The Onion* stated a darkly comic bit of truth. An article bore the headline: "Dead Iraqi would have loved democracy" ("Dead Iraqi," 2003). The article proceeded:

BAGHDAD, IRAQ—Baghdad resident Taha Sabri, killed Monday in a U.S. air strike on his city, would have loved the eventual liberation of Iraq and establishment of democracy, had he lived to see it....

The fact that the invasion has aggravated suffering in Iraq undermines goodwill towards the notion that the U.S. invaded to be a "good neighbour."

During the 1990s, during the time of the sanctions against Iraq, UNICEF estimated that the sanctions had caused the deaths of 500,000 children (Bowen, 1999, August 12). 500,000 children needlessly suffered and died from lack of medical supplies and food: 500,000 children who died to keep Saddam "contained" and "unthreatening" to his immediate neighbours and others; 500,000 children who died in the name of "good neighbourliness." CBS *60 Minutes*' Leslie Stahl asked then U.S. Secretary of State Madeline Albright (the U.S. was the driving force behind the sanctions) about this horrific human cost. Secretary Albright responded, "[W]e think it's worth it" (Hewitt, 1996).

Another understanding of "Love your neighbour" is the so-called golden rule—Love your neighbour as yourself. If people really did love their neighbours as themselves, would they do some of the things they do? If President Bush really loved his neighbours as himself, would he have taken the steps through the invasion of Iraq that led to the deaths of 100,000 souls and counting, plus the untold ravages of shattered bodies, minds, lives, and families? If people truly loved their neighbours as themselves, would the mainstream media in the U.S. focus almost solely upon the about 1200 U.S. troops killed, to the near exclusion of the 100,000 Iraqi dead (as of November, 2004)?

The golden rule is a well-known moral maxim that exists across cultures. *The Analects* of Confucius states: "What you do not wish for yourself, do not impose on others." (12:2). Some have even read the invocation into Immanuel Kant's Categorical

Imperative, from *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785/1949) and his *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788/2002): Act according to the maxim whereby you can at the same time will that your action should be a universal law. Nevertheless, the golden rule is a fine sentiment. However, I suggest that, while beautiful and worthy, it is not a guarantor of good neighbourliness. Freud (2005) takes up the notion of the neighbour and rejects the demand to "love thy neighbor as thyself," and Lacan (1992) picks up this theme and argues that the neighbour is a stranger (Reinhard, 1997).

Neighbourly love is a worthy sentiment, but in and of itself, and its attendant slippages of meaning and inference, is not enough to form the definitive basis of an education for human rights and global citizenship. Love your neighbour—yes, by all means, but let us try to do so in a way that does more than replay old patterns. Throughout history, individuals who care have called upon people to love their neighbour. Much love has been called for, but we seem no closer to seeing any end of war.

This reading has touched very briefly upon influential thinkers and philosophers. I would like to proceed on a playful note and invoke a "higher" authority than Derrida in today's media-saturated world. What is that higher authority? Of course, if you'll bear with me, it is *Star Trek*. In the original 1960s series, the heroes would beam down to a planet, and Captain Kirk would often ask the same question: "Spock, is there life?" First Officer Spock would point his whirring "tricorder" around the Styrofoam rock-littered landscape, pause, and reply, "Yes, Jim, there's life, but not as we know it."



What would new types of neighbourly love look like? Perhaps we cannot describe them but only know them when we see them. Perhaps, after Spock, we would find neighbourly love, but not as we know it.

### Neighbourly Love and Perfectibility

The theme of a neighbourliness-to-come maps to the Derridean idea of "perfectibility." Discussing its structure relating to "democracy," Derrida states, "'Democracy to come' does not mean a future democracy that will one day be 'present'. Democracy will never exist in the present; it is not presentable" (as cited in Deutscher, 2005, 100). Here, democracy, as the dream and spirit of its own perfectibility that can emerge in the present, ever fails. It is not a failure of occurrence but the ever-occurring occurrence of failure. One can keep, after a certain reading of the stanza from a traditional U.S. civil rights song, one's "eyes on the prize" (as cited in Herndon, 2005). To do so, I must keep looking always beyond, toward the goal. The prize must remain ever upon the horizon. No matter how close I move toward it, the prize remains ever in vision, rather than in hand. Certainly, the American civil rights movement has made progress. Legislative achievements have been won. However, recall Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech (King, 2005). The dream continues—a nocturnal apparition returning ever to haunt a sleeping democracy. Democracy-to-come haunts the sleeping giant of a democracy more asserted than perfect, more necessarily perfectible than actualized or complete.

Kant (1977) wrote famously after having read presumably Hume's (1977) *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* that the text had awakened him from his

"dogmatic slumber" (p. 5). The work evoked for Kant the idealistic nature of what he had taken to be the phenomenal world. The book set him on a course to reasoning that the structure of perceptions is determined by irreducible, universal categories of Mind. I reference Kant ironically. Derrida argues, "Democracy will never exist in the present; it is not presentable, and it is not a regulative idea in the Kantian sense" (as cited in Deutscher, 2005, 100). Democracy, here, is less an impossible possibility than a possible impossibility. It is less a pure, perfect category to which the world ever fails than a structuring failure that drives the world ever toward its perfectibility.

Derrida's later work lends further contingency to the regulative idea of perfectibility. I read his work, going back to *Of Grammatology* (1967/1976), as an interruption of the idea of "the perfect," especially as it operates as an unstated metaphysical presupposition of texts. Perfectibility displaces the perfect as an irreducibly incorruptible idea, as a measure by which the Other always lacks and, thus, "justifiably" subordinates. The idea of the perfectible recasts "the perfect" in light of a messianic future. However, the perfectible does not assert a new perfect, a new improved perfection remobilizing the conceits of originary perfection, but, rather, casts even that dream as Other.

The perfectible initiates a haunting that ever hovers over the present with its fictive assertion of perfection. Like, as has been pointed out by others, the "h" itself of "hauntology," the perfectible is both there and not there. Hauntology, pronounced in French, renders the "h" unheard. When spoken, hauntology and ontology may be indistinguishable. More properly "speaking," one may speak ontology without conscious recognition of the way it is haunted, rendering the mouth itself as a crypt. The speaking

mouth becomes an open space and repository of incorporated Others. The Others of my speech haunt its very possibility and procedure. The ontology of my speech is always already haunted, and my ear may not always hear it. However, when I read "hauntology," or when I read hauntologically, similarly as I read the films of this thesis, the hauntings become apparent. Ironically, the ontological dimension of the conjured hauntings becomes uncannily present and absent. Hauntology bears an ontology, with each being both affirmed and negated ...

Similarly, the perfectible haunts both spoken assertions of the "the perfect" and their unstated metaphysical presuppositions. The perfectible disrupts both. Or, more properly speaking, the perfectible disrupts the conceits of both. To state that the perfectible plainly and simply disrupts the spoken assertion of "the perfect" and its unstated metaphysical presuppositions would ascribe to those elements (the "perfect" and its presuppositions) an ontological status that would belie their perfectibility. If the statement and presuppositions were perfect (as described by their name) already, in ideal form, they would require no more perfectibility. If they were merely falsely asserted as perfect—in other words, ontologically otherwise to their name—a purported disruption would presume to correct them, to instate some order of proper signification, in other words, to make them properly perfect. Such correction would be to "clarify," and thereby reinforce, ontology. Rather, perfectibility seeks to convoke ontology's Other: hauntology. I apply the dynamic of the perfectible to the good neighbour. (Derrida applies it to a variety of concepts, including democracy, hospitality, and the gift.) The concept/assumption of the perfectly good neighbour becomes haunted by the call for an



undefined, indefinable good-neighbour-to-come that presumably would avoid the metaphysical trap of simultaneously asserting the bad neighbour.

The logic of a truly perfect good neighbour opens to a similar structure described in St. Anselm's Ontological Argument for the Existence of God. St. Anselm of Canterbury argues that the very idea of God necessitates the existence of God (Halverson, 1981). Here, God is the being of which no other is greater. God is perfect. Moreover, this God "exists" in my understanding. A being that exists in my understanding as well as in reality would be greater than a being, which exists only in my understanding. Therefore, by definition, the being, which is greater than all others would have to exist in both my understanding and reality. I read a similar structure in the idea of the perfect. The perfect also would have to surpass its imperfection. The perfect neighbour also would have to surpass the imperfect neighbour. Importantly though, the perfect neighbour also would have to surpass the possibility of any more-perfect neighbour. The perfect neighbour would be that neighbour than which no other exceeds.

This discussion leads to an idea Derrida introduces in his later work, that of the "barely" (as cited in Deutscher, 2005, p. 105). The idea contends that the perfect form could arise at some point in history, but we could be barely aware of it. The idea avoids closing down the possibility of perfection's occurrence. After all, a certain (and relatively uncontroversial) spirit of deconstruction intends precisely to open to the Other. By asserting that the perfect Other is strictly impossible (rather than asserting it as impossibly strict) is to close down its possibility. Moreover, I borrow again from a spirit of St. Anselm the textual possibility in which something that exists in both reality and the understanding is more perfect than something which "exists" only in the understanding.

The economy of existence and understanding demonstrates troubling instabilities. Are the two components, existence and understanding, equal in value? Does something merely existing in reality and of which no one possesses an understanding become less perfect than that, which satisfies both criteria (existing and being understood as existing)? I qualify what I mean by understanding: I move from "understanding" as conceptual, analytic understanding to an empirical understanding. After a reading of the problem attributed to Berkeley of the tree falling in the forest with no one empirically experiencing it, the fallen tree that is both observed and fallen seems more perfect than one which satisfies only one of the measures. The claim opens to a troublingly slippery slope. Is the fallen tree known by two hearers more perfect than one known by only one—with fallen trees rising in perfection the more they become known? Empirical understanding as a determining criteria of perfection opens to curious implications. However, what I focus upon here in the problem of the unheard falling tree is not the conceptual possibility of falling trees, but the ontological status of some purportedly particular fallen tree (although, the positive status of the latter would tautologically affirm the former). The conceptual possibility of falling trees seems not to be in doubt, for across history falling trees surely have been witnessed.

The perfectible neighbour is another kind of matter though. In fact, both the perfect and perfectible neighbours are matters of doubt—both ontologically and epistemologically. In any case, the "barely" serves as a tenuous connection between the two. Their ontological status is rescued by the "barely," which is an epistemological status that is not an epistemological status conferring an existence, which is not an existence. A perfect neighbourliness that merely exists (and is not known to exist), even

fleetingly and in the past, seems less perfect than one which both exists and is known to exist. The "barely" epistemological test, which is not a test, seems to satisfy the claim. Moreover, the "barely" nature of the barely itself presumably avoids the ontological tests of epistemological accuracy. The "barely" is a haunting test and a haunting criteria, which I argue holds together perfectibility. It preserves perfectibility's possibility while avoiding the trap of messianic specificity.

Perfectibility also initiates psychoanalytic implications. The present discussion maps to a certain reading of the Lacanian Real. I read "the Real" as that ever escaping yet structuring the Symbolic order and its Imaginary supports. I can never apprehend the Real as such. It is, by definition, that which remains ever beyond such apprehension. However, the Real, as such, is also ever beyond definition. It shares a certain spirit of the structure of Kant's noumena, that which cannot be understood beyond the categories of Mind. However, the similarity rests with mutual inaccessibility. The Real is not simply a *thing as such*. It is a structuring, psychically determining inaccessibility.

The Real is amenable to announcements through slippages, interruptions, and traumas in the Symbolic order. I use the word "announcements" because I do not access the Real as such in the moment of such an event. When distinguished guests enter a formal party in an old movie, and the door attendant announces "Lord and Lady So-And-So," the guests within the party have not yet met the guests; they have not been personally introduced to them. The other guests have merely heard an announcement of a "presence," although the announced guests are not present before the others. Surely, presence would correspond with something more immediate than an announcement. The announced guests, in the announcement itself, are both "present" and absent, and,

therefore, neither properly speaking. The announced guests haunt the party at its doorway. This haunting haunts both before and after the announcement. The possibility of announcement haunts in both its anticipation and its lingering. Such as it is with announcements of the Real. It becomes an inaccessible Other that never quite leaves one alone.

As in the haunting story and its cousin, the horror film—the kind with genuine jolts, jumps, and scares—such a movie often begins with a fright. It sets the viewer off-ease and haunts the remainder of the film's viewing with lingering anticipation—lingering in its effects and anticipating of future frights. Subsequent events often assume a similar structure. Anticipation heightens as the moment of fright approaches. One of the film's characters moves through a house, say, following some strange noise. Anticipation builds. A false jolt often occurs, which could be, for example, a cat scurrying through the corners or jumping out into the flashlight's startling beam. The viewer jumps. A moment of relief, which is not a moment of relief, follows. The audience knows that very shortly after the false start, after the harmless feline appears, in a soon-to-follow moment of calm, the real source of the character's terror will emerge. After the character relaxes, the seasoned viewer can anticipate that the genuine ghost/monster/killer will appear just when "least expected." The crucial aspect of this little narrative for my present purpose, illustrating the haunting tendency of the Real and its announcements, is the relieved pleasure that comes when the thing-to-be-feared finally arrives. This feeling is the relief of the tension leading up to the announcement. The viewer knows that something is ever waiting to appear, and that knowledge haunts her viewing of the film. However, the very structure of the process plays upon the relief to render the viewer vulnerable to yet





another scare. The scares come in one-two punches. The Symbolic order and its Imaginary supports are similarly ever haunted by announcements of the Real. Ineffable expectation haunts one's conscious experience.

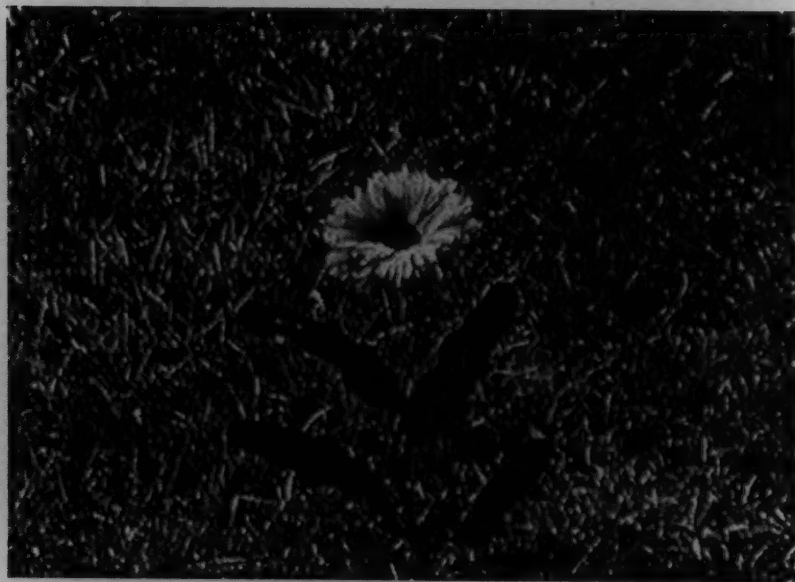
Neighbourliness also haunts with anticipation. Ontology haunts the hermeneutic. I have some experience and interpretation of neighbourliness. However, the Real of neighbourliness and the structure of bad neighbourliness haunt my experience and interpretation. In *Neighbours*, the two men who had been so "surface-ly" placid break into outright war. Their neighbourliness is structured by geography and property. Both their properties are fully in view: each possesses a house, a yard, a chair, a pipe, and so on. "What's mine is mine and what's your is yours" is indissolubly organized by a border, and the border bears the germ of its own transgression—to say nothing of the borders within borders: the women with infants within the two houses—the house's wall being another border between inside/outside and rendering the men and women neighbours within their own property. Neighbourliness necessitates transgression. As the saying states: rules are made to be broken (truer than I often realize). If transgression were not *de facto* "invited," the rule would not be needed. If bad neighbourliness were not invited, the border, the property line—for the possibility/site/opportunity for transgression—would not be needed.

The spectre of the bad neighbour opens to another aspect of neighbourly haunting. What of a possible bad neighbour to come? Why do we assume messianism only to be good? Certainly, the good neighbour's haunting Other can be an inassimilable, irreducible neighbourliness to come that would steer clear of the metaphysical trap of necessary enmity. However, by the logic of openness, the neighbourliness to come could

simply more craftily and more sophisticatedly reinsert the bad neighbour. Why do we assume that the messianic perfectibility to come is "ethical?" My answer is there is no such certainty. The perfectible is an open promise including the ever-haunting possibility of its "failure." Similarly, the phantom of a new neighbourliness haunting the horizon is not an opportunity to lay down the burden of "ethical" action. In fact, I read it as something very different. I read it as a call to intervene. Castricano (2001), at the beginning of *Cryptomimesis*, quotes Derrida from "The Art of Memories":

Yesterday, you may remember, we made each other  
a promise. I now recall it, but you already sense all  
the trouble we will have in ordering all these presents:  
these past presents which consist of the present of a promise,  
whose opening toward the present to come is not that of  
an expectation or an anticipation but that of commitment. (as cited in Castricano,  
front leaf)

The unrepresentable present to come calls me to commitment. This commitment interpellates intervention, and there are many ways to intervene. I offer this chapter as one such possibility. It, I hope, models curricular thinking for learning and teaching about conflict, impediments to moving beyond it, and possibilities for doing so.



(Neighbours/*Voisins*, n.d.)

### Chapter Eight:

#### *Paul Tomkowicz: Street Railway Switchman* Haunts with Invisibility, Spectral Specularity, and Possibilities for Returning the Gaze



(Paul Tomkowicz: *Street-Railway Switchman*, n.d.)

*Paul Tomkowicz: Street-Railway Switchman* (Kroiter and Daly, 1954) is a classic National Film Board of Canada documentary. The film hails from the Board's innovative Studio B, which, during the 1950s and 60s, produced some of the most pioneering, personal, and poetic productions within the agency. *Tomkowicz* concerns a 64-year-old Polish émigré who sweeps the streetcar rails during Winnipeg's biting winter. He ruminates about his life back in Eastern Europe and here in Canada as well as about how much he appreciates what he has here. He professes gratefulness for his sense of public well-being.



Today, in the public-versus-private charged discourse of life in Canada, such reflection speaks to a number of cultural, economic, and political concerns facing the country 50 years after the film's original release. This chapter reflects upon and analyzes this formative text in the development of ideas around the post-War liberal welfare state in Canada. In the film, Tomkowicz labours invisibly to maintain the modern Canada. This chapter rethinks and reveals the spectral nature of such invisibility and offers a model for specular action.

### **Tomkowicz and Invisibility**

Tomkowicz invisibly undertakes his solitary winter work in the shadows of modern Canada. He begins his day at night as most other Winnipeggers meander along Main Street to enjoy a film, taking in the social life in the neon-lit city. Tomkowicz tends the rails he rides to his place of work. No one notices the large, strong, robust man who rides and then disembarks from the train, carrying his brush, oil lantern, and pail of salt. He begins his nightly labour and reflects, "Winnipeg's all right...you can go in the street, daytime, nighttime, nobody's bother you" (Kroiter and Daly, 1953). Tomkowicz evokes an elusive, dreamlike memory of an idea in the Canadian imaginary, whereby people may work and feel a sense of general well-being, a general sense of public well-being. In the film, the modern, brightly lit downtown night of Winnipeg, the modern metroscape, cannot hide from its own drafty corners and open overcoat as the wind and snow whistle in with their own story, blowing through the city, mocking its conceit of sanitary safety from nature as the snow and ice pile up on the pavement. Tomkowicz clears away the

snowfall to allow the street trains (as embodiments of modern Canada) their indulgence in "unimpeded" progress.

I felt myself drawn to the film. In fact, it was one of the first NFB documentaries that I did any sustained work on. For one thing, I found myself strangely identifying with Tomkowicz. Before I went to university, I worked in a factory for seven years and also in construction, landscaping, and other assorted jobs. I identify with Tomkowicz' vague "untouchability" as an invisible labourer. He embodies a variation on caste-like untouchability. He is un-seeable.

In one scene, through the windows of a modern department store, the camera catches Tomkowicz sweeping the rails. He seems more bundled than do the mannequins in their fur coats, staring off mutely from the showcase. He also appears through the window of a flower store (suggesting Tomkowicz's recollected memory of his garden back in Poland?). No one sees him—he lives free from the eyes of Winnipeggers.

Indeed, Tomkowicz labours in and loves Canada in a condition of invisibility. Theatre-goers pour into the street, but no one sees Tomkowicz. He rescues a disabled streetcar after it disconnects from the electricity cable. The passengers within do not know who put them back on their journey; they know only that the lights have returned and they can go back to their books and private thoughts. Tomkowicz crosses the street through the middle of traffic, like a ghost, apparently in no danger, wafting through the slippery avenue of anxious drivers. At the end of his day's work, he peers through the window of a diner, seen only by the counterman, before entering for his breakfast of black coffee, a half dozen boiled eggs, bread, and wieners. Tomkowicz sets his brush, lantern, and pail of salt in a corner of the diner and assumes a seat at the counter,

unnoticed by the few lingering morning commuters. He sits unseen by the office workers catching the train to their jobs, wearing suits and combing pomade through their hair.

Nonetheless, Tomkowicz appreciates and loves his new homeland. He compares life here to the experiences of his family back in Eastern Europe. He recounts, "My sister wrote me in my village in Poland. The soldiers came in the night and murdered 29 people—my brother, my brother's wife. Why they do that? I don't know" (Kroiter and Daly, 1953). Life is not easy for Tomkowicz here in Canada. He labours hard. He remembers longingly his comrades and community back home, his nice house in the country, and gatherings with friends. Those things are absent in the biting Winnipeg winter, but Tomkowicz appreciates what he has in Canada, especially as he grows older, and he knows his days of physical strength and vitality are near their end. "Before that's all over, I be on a pension. ... One more year, then I be 65. I go for retire. It's the law" (Kroiter and Daly, 1953). Tomkowicz cherishes the sense of protection he feels in the modern, post-War Canada.

### **Haunting Invisibility**

A Haunting Inquiry into Tomkowicz's invisibility "reveals" the visible/invisible as spectral. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida (1994) provides a discussion of invisibility. Here, the commodity is not strictly ontological; it is hauntological. Its character bears a haunting dimension. The non-perceptibility of the commodities' exchange value haunts the everyday perception of its use value. Invisibility haunts its visibility.

Chapter Five, "Apparition of the Inapparent: The Phenomenological 'Conjuring Trick,'" (1994) explores the haunting/haunted nature of commodities. The exploration



takes as its starting point Marx's distinction between a commodity's use value and its exchange value. He gives the example of a table. In the classical formulation, a table is a fairly straightforward and *useful* object. One may sit at it, play cards upon it, dine upon it, or place a lamp upon it. Its uses correspond to its use value, which appears readily apparent. Less apparent, however, is the table's exchange value, referring to the networks of phantomic properties haunting the artifact and put into play through its implication in markets. The table is composed and constituted of exchanges. These, most notably, include raw materials and labour. The wood comprising the table haunts with so much more than is phenomenologically apparent. Its journey from forest (as tree) to parlour (as table) involves myriad steps of exchange. The most crucial one for the Marxian formulation is the exchange of labour. Workers sell their labour for far less than it comes to be worth in the market exchange of the table (as commodity). The difference between the labour (converted to a medium of exchange) and the market price comprises the commodity's surplus value. This value is generated by the workers' labour but extracted through the system of exchanges. The extracted value is pivotal to Marx's formulation that workers in the system of Capital are exploited.

I discuss commodity fetishism in Chapter Two, Theme Three of this thesis. In Chapter Three, I introduced the work of Žižek (1989) to explicate how economies of fantasy implicate psychic processes of how we can visualize one aspect of a commodity (its use value) while another remains invisible (for example, its exchange value). The present chapter takes a slightly different, though not necessarily contradictory, approach to the processes of visibility and invisibility.



I begin with some of Derrida's readings of invisibility. Derrida aims to go beyond the merely visible, beyond the reductively sensible. He writes,

The point is right away to go beyond, in one fell swoop, the first glance and thus to see there where this glance is blind, to open one's eyes there where one does not see where one sees. One must see, at first sight, what does not let itself be seen. And this is invisibility itself. For what first sight misses is the invisible. The flaw, the error of first sight is to see, and not to notice the invisible. If one does not give oneself up to this invisibility, then the table-commodity, immediately perceived, remains what it is not, a simple thing deemed to be trivial and too obvious. This trivial thing seems to comprehend itself... [as] the thing itself in the phenomenality of its phenomenon, a quite simple wooden table. So as to prepare us to see this invisibility, to see without seeing, thus to think the body without body of this invisible visibility—the ghost already taking shape—Marx declares that the thing in question, namely, the commodity, *is not so simple* (a warning that will elicit snickers from all the imbeciles, until the end of time, who never believe anything, of course, because they are so sure that what they see is seen, everything that is seen, only what is seen). The commodity is even very complicated; it is blurred, tangled, paralyzing, aporetic, perhaps undecidable.... It is so disconcerting, this commodity-thing, that one has to approach it with 'metaphysical' subtlety and 'theological' niceties. Precisely in order to analyze the metaphysical and the theological that constructed the phenomenological good sense of the thing itself, of the immediately visible commodity, in flesh and blood: as what it is 'at first sight'.... This phenomenological good sense may

perhaps be valid for use-value. It is perhaps even meant to be valid only for use-value. (1994, 149-50)

Derrida suggests that the function of "phenomenologicality" functions precisely to keep from vision the market and its implications of exchange value.

When the table takes to the stage as a commodity, however, its character changes, for it becomes a commodity—a *thing* composed of relations of exchange. Here, it becomes both sensible and transcending of sensibility—sensuous and non-sensuous. The commodity transcends sensibility even as one senses it. Derrida writes,

The ghostly schema now appears indispensable. The commodity is a 'thing' without phenomenon, a thing in flight that surpasses the senses (it is invisible, intangible, inaudible, and odorless); but this transcendence is not altogether spiritual, it retains the bodiless body which we have recognized as making the difference between specter and spirit. What surpasses the senses still passes before us in the silhouette of the sensuous body that it nevertheless lacks or that remains inaccessible to us. (1994, 150-1)

The purportedly clear distinction between "visible" and "invisible" becomes troubled. The visible character of the commodity's use value haunts by and with invisible exchange value characteristics. The two conceptual frameworks (use value and exchange value) provide different heuristic lenses. Ironically, the exchange value lens does not help me "see" the exchange value *per se* of the commodity. Rather, it helps me not see it. This phenomenon differs from the naïve, first-look "not seeing" provided by the use value lens. This phenomenon is an informed "not seeing." Rather than "not seeing" what is not there, I see what is "not there." I do not see the exchange value as presence, nor do I

precisely see it as absence. Presence and absence are the two primary modalities of ontology. Rather, I see the commodities' spectral hauntology.

This discussion has implications for the case of Tomkowicz. Obviously, the man is not a commodity *per se*, although Tomkowicz's image, that which I possess access to in the film, bears some commodity-like characteristics. The film itself is a commodity of sorts. It is certainly implicated in a political economy of production, marketing, and distribution. However, the film's character as an ideological text is perhaps most interesting. This character is not distinct from its political economy of exchanges, and that economy influences its status and tenor as an ideological text.

The film has a certain visibility/invisibility dynamic. I view the film, and I feel I somehow become acquainted with Tomkowicz. I feel I come to know something of his life, his world, his problems, and his dreams. However, what I see is not Tomkowicz. What I see, phenomenologically, is not Tomkowicz. What I see is the image from a VHS tape (itself transferred from film stock somewhere in the bowels of the NFB in the late 1980s). I retrieved the video from a collection of NFB classics compiled to celebrate the agency's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1989. With apologies to copyright laws, I bootlegged a copy onto my own VHS tape. My VHS machine reads the tape and renders its images on my TV screen. Consequently, what I see is very far removed from Tomkowicz the man. Moreover, when Tomkowicz recorded his auditory testimony, which provides the narration for film, the director found Tomkowicz's voice too indecipherable, due in part to his heavy Polish accent, so an actor recorded Tomkowicz's words, which we hear when viewing the film. Thus, what do I see when I view the film? Certainly not Tomkowicz *per se*.



Tomkowicz the man haunts the text. But how does he haunt it? I explore some of the language of haunting as I find it in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 2005). Does Tomkowicz haunt the text as a ghost? (Immaterial and non-corporeal?) As an apparition? (A vision or appearance?) As a phantom? (Merely an appearance rather than reality?) As a spirit? (An “animating or vital principal” (2005); a soul?) I argue that Tomkowicz haunts the film as a spectre (combining characteristics of ghost, apparition, phantom, and spirit.).

1. Surely, Tomkowicz’ “presence” *per se* in the film is immaterial and non-corporeal—like that of a ghost.
  2. “Tomkowicz” bears the character of an apparition in that “he” manifests some (imagistic) appearance.
  3. That appearance is phantomic such that Tomkowicz *per se* is not present upon the screen (For one thing, he has long passed away).
  4. Could it be said that some spirit of Tomkowicz is present? Yes, there must be some haunting spirit of the man if not to anchor, then at least flavour the text.
- Some spirit of Tomkowicz must linger at least to render the film recognizable as a profile of him.

However, none of these haunting signifiers sufficiently either carries the day or cancels out the influence of the others. In contrast, a “spectral” status for Tomkowicz opens to a “comprehensive” signification of his haunting.

Tomkowicz becomes spectral, and spectrality haunts with implications for visibility and invisibility. Jodey Castricano (2001), in *Cryptomimesis*, writes:



[T]he word *speculate* returns, reminding us of its affinity with *specular*—a word which in turn evokes Lacan's conception of the mirror stage as being 'formative of the function of the I'... shares an uncanny link with the word 'specter.' But if the word *specular* draws attention to the misrecognition, anticipation, and retroaction of Lacan's temporal dialectic—its specular determinants—*specter* suggests an uncanniness to that dialectic by drawing attention to the *spectral* nature of the 'I' in terms of ghostly inheritance and an unresolved debt or promise. In effect, the very idea of the first-person singular, with all its claims to agency and consciousness, is irrevocably undermined when that pronoun is shown to be plurally determined. What then does it mean to speculate? What phantoms come into play? Especially when one writes? Derrida suggests that 'speculation always speculates on some specter, it speculates in the mirror of what it produces, on the spectacle that it gives itself and that it gives itself to see. It believes in what it believes it sees: in representations.' (10)

The spectre haunts with and by specularity, with making a spectacle of itself as well as with all its other, less ontologically bounded selves—with its hauntological selves. It is, after all, a spectre.

What we recognize (after Lacan) when we see the spectre is not what we think it is. What we think it is is precisely not what it is. The Tomkowicz that we see when viewing the film is not Tomkowicz. However, it is not not-Tomkowicz either. After all, the Tomkowicz upon the screen haunts with a certain spirit of the man, even though such spirits *per se* are phantomic—they are "merely" appearances—apparitions—of some elusive real of Tomkowicz. The real of Tomkowicz no longer exists in any form

recognizable as he is upon the screen. The man is long deceased. What we recognize as Tomkowicz is strictly a misrecognition. The Tomkowicz we see is spectral. The spectacle of Tomkowicz, the specular manifestation, is a spectre.

However, spectrality is not a one-way street. Spectrality involves not simply some naïve object of spectacle but also the spectator and the space of specularity, the lines of sight. In this sense, the apparition becomes not simply an object of vision, for “apparition” is part of the language of *haunting*. When an apparition appears, it appears to someone, and that person is thusly haunted. This “phenomenon” opens to another crucial aspect of the spectre. The spectre often is terrible. It can appear in a fearsome sense. The spectre frightens those who spectate it. This feature of spectrality opens to the nature of the haunting Others of which *Haunting Inquiry* concerns itself. The Others unsettle. Seeing the Others, experiencing them as spectacle, is frightening. The spectre is something we do not want to see, yet we look. We look, and when the apparition appears, we cover our eyes. We want to see, but we cannot bear to. “Speculate” also has a sense of gambling. Speculating involves taking a risk. It means putting down our money for uncertain returns. Why do we do so? While speculation in this sense is risky, it also provides opportunity for reward.

What is the risk to us in looking upon the spectre? Why does doing so invoke fear? Why, even when we see it, must we cover our eyes? Recall the tale of Pliny the Younger (Jaehnig, 1999) recounted in this thesis’ introduction. Here, the spectre reveals where the bones are buried. The Earth we walk upon covers buried secrets [even if the secrets are indeterminate (more on this implication in Chapter 11)]—buried illicit secrets—evidence of secret, concealed crimes of something we do not want to face,

especially if we benefit from such crimes, and especially if our lives are somehow made more comfortable by those crimes. The invisibility of Others becomes necessary for a "satisfying" way of life.

In the film, Tomkowicz seems invisible. He clears the rails of snow. He uses salt to melt ice from the rails. He repairs the trolley line's connection. What is the payoff from Tomkowicz's invisibility? It allows comfortable modern living. To see those (like Tomkowicz) who make that lifestyle possible can render it uncomfortable. The fantasy of modern Winnipeg life depends upon Tomkowicz's invisibility. This life emblemizes postmodern consumer life. The fantasy of this life depends upon invisibility of its Others, especially in a geography of globalized dispersion. Geographies of wealth and poverty are not discreetly separated. The cruel logics of ghetto-ization, refugee camps, and diasporas render consumer society's Others invisible to a point. This secret is one everybody knows. Even when I do not see the Other, it sees me. This is the spectral Other of liberal democracy and consumer culture. When I say such Otherness is "spectral," understand clearly, I do not mean the reality of hunger, illness, poverty, and exploitation. That reality is the "Real," the Real of global, liberal, postmodern, consumer culture and society. This Otherness is "spectral" only in that it haunts fantasies necessary to sustain the culture for those most benefiting from it. This Otherness is a haunting spectre, as Tomkowicz is a haunting spectre of modern Winnipeg and post-War Canada.

### **Returning the Gaze and Canadian Public Well Being**

This section further troubles the visibility/invisibility dynamic by calling upon Canadians to return the gaze and disrupt the visual trajectory of neoliberal reform.



Tomkowicz' invisibility becomes emblematic of many Canadians who depend upon post-War institutions of public well-being. Just as Tomkowicz is invisible, so are many working and non-working poor and others who need and cherish the legacy of Canada's liberal welfare state. However, the spectral nature of visibility/invisibility troubles the determining implication of merely being either the one gazed upon or the one gazing. Spectrality offers novel possibilities and interrupts received certainties.

### *Specularity's "Others"*

Consider Alejandro Amenabar's (2001) film *The Others*, starring Nicole Kidman. A mother and her two children return to a sprawling, seemingly abandoned, country estate. We hear they had lived there sometime in the past. Soon, strange happenings begin to occur. The children experience strange sightings. They see Others. The house must be haunted—which it is. For most of the film, the mother does not see the Others of the children's' visions. Eventually, near the end of the film, she does see them performing a séance. The twist ending reveals that these figures are ~~not~~ the ghosts, for Nicole Kidman and the children are the ones who are haunting the house. They are not the "rightful and legitimate" residents. *They are the Others*. They haunt and trouble the rightful and legitimate residents of the land. They are not the owners. They are the intruders.

The film could go further in deconstructing the institutional relationships between property ownership and ontology. At the end of the film, "ownership," "human," and "non-human" still stand as ontologically discreet categories. However, the film deliciously implicates economies of specularity and privilege. It troubles identity. I read



the film by implicitly asking, what if one who considers himself "privileged," is, in fact, not. The film shows how presumed privilege can be troubled by its haunting Others. The specular meets the spectral. Kidman cannot (or will not) see the Others, which haunt her. When she finally does, she "sees" that her identity needs to be shifted. Specularity meets spectrality. There is an old joke about there being "one" in every room, and if you cannot tell who it is, it might be you.

Received economies seem to require an Other, an abjected, a subordinate. The very structure of difference often seems to embody hierarchy. Identity gives the process a name. In the film, one is the owner; the *Other* is the ghost. The film could go further in challenging that structure of binaric hierarchy. However, it does show the mutability of the hierarchy's ascriptions and the tenuousness of the identifications within it. Spectral specularity can point a finger toward the Otherwise. Hauntology can disturb ontology. These hierarchies, after all, are germane to the structure of metaphysics, which is the spirit of ontology.

Viewing Tomkowicz this way can provide some interesting implications for the specular economy of Canadian public life. Viewing Tomkowicz (and his invisibility) spectrally can achieve two things. First, it can disrupt the ontological status of visibility/invisibility. By "seeing" Tomkowicz as spectral, the visibility test for positive ontological status loses some of its hegemony. Not only does the status of visibility suffer, but also the status of ontology as the singularly privileged status. The spectral status of hauntology emerges. Second, viewing Tomkowicz spectrally can initiate the groundwork for an economy of returning the gaze. His Otherness to visibility models life outside visibility's glare. Tomkowicz models less investment in the received visual

economy than other Winnipeggers do. Having less invested, he has less to lose by disrupting it. He is not visible. He is spectral. His spectrality still bears the possibility for specularity, for specular agency. Tomkowicz models a position from which to return the specular gaze disruptively.

### *Returning the Gaze*

Canada's social safety net, its liberal welfare state, the institutions of post-War prosperity and the ideas, ideologies, discursive articulations, and narratives Canadians tell themselves about these things have never been perfect or unproblematic. However, they have been better respected, funded, appreciated, and protected. I do not mean better appreciated by the many people who use and need them, but better served by the configuration of commercial and corporate interests (Barlow and Robertson, 1994), think tanks (such as the Fraser Institute), and policy makers (Ralph Klein, Mike Harris, Gordon Campbell, Stephen Harper) who scale back the programs. Today, private interests seem synonymous with public well-being (Fraser Institute, 2004).

Tomkowicz labours invisibly, yet he enjoys his idea of public well-being. Today, however, people like Tomkowicz are entirely too seen—too seen in a negative light. Such people and ideas have come under the scrutinous gaze of private interests that assail Canadians with notions of “accountability,” “efficiency,” and “competitiveness.” Today, Canadians are entirely too visible to a panoptic gaze, according to Foucault's (Foucault, 1975/1979) treatment of Jeremy Bentham's design for the panopticon prison. Here, a single turret rises in the centre of a vast circular configuration of cells. Prisoners do not know if they are being observed, if they are being guarded; so they, therefore, in effect,

guard themselves. Foucault and his followers (Bartky, 1988) have taken the panopticon to be a metaphor for regimes of specularity and surveillance in Enlightenment institutions and modern society. People like Tomkowicz and ideas of public well-being come under the specular regime of neoliberal agendas. The idea of public well-being becomes attacked, maligned, and ruthlessly undercut, often with the electoral support (notably in Alberta, Ontario, and British Columbia in the last decade) of the very same people whom Tomkowicz's notions would serve.

Foucault's account of the panopticon has provided a useful, if dated, theory for the analysis of modern institutions that has, in turn, given way to subsequent frameworks while remaining an influential and fruitful metaphor. For example, Gilles Deleuze (1992) has argued in favour of a conception not of a society of surveillance but of control. This conception identifies a post-surveillance society, a postmodern object/institution distinct from the Benthamian modern object-as-metaphor for Enlightenment institutions.

Whereas Foucault's focal institution is the prison, Deleuze's is the corporation. I think of the kind of prosperous, complexly managed, post-World War II organization like IBM as an example. However, even the Society of Control theory has its limits. What of the "21<sup>st</sup> corporation," which I exemplify with Nike. Such an institution is global, dispersed, not the "cushy," post-War corporation of career-length employment, medical benefits, and pensions. These newer corporations are marked by short-term contracts, overseas manufacturing arrangements, and consultancy-driven management protocols. The Society of Control thesis represents a valuable intellectual progression from the surveillance metaphor but does not account for what comes after itself (a necessary "failing" without the fiction of dialectical telos). I find much of value in Deleuze's argument. For example,



I note my own observation of modern customer service collapse and, at least the pretence, of "valuing the customer." In many contemporary corporations, customer service is outsourced to call centres operating according to elaborate procedures. The customer becomes not a partner to be valued but a problem to be managed. Human interaction is reduced to algorithmic scripts. This phenomenon manifests both elements of control and surveillance. After all, when contacting one of these call centres, the customer is often told that their call "may be monitored." The uncertainty of surveillance, of whether or not one is being watched (or, indeed, listened to) is thoroughly "panoptic." Thus, the Foucauldian/Benthamian heuristic I employ in the present analysis is germane, especially when informed by a certain haunting spirit of the Society of Control.

Today, as a theoretical-strategic response to attacks against the liberal welfare state, I suggest Canadians return the gaze. Canadians may look back upon the private interests looking upon them. Lacanian gaze theory circumvents and disrupts certain assumptions of the Foucauldian panoptic gaze' one-way specular direction in which the "guard," the presumed viewing subject gazes upon an object, the prisoner. In turn, the prisoner internalizes that gaze and constitutes within herself both an imagined guarding subject and herself as a viewed and thus guarded object. The individual imagines both the guard gazing and herself gazed upon. For Lacan (1981), however, the individual looks back toward the gaze of the other, and the two lines of sight meet in the middle. This point of specular convergence is the screen-image, a visual space but not of one or the other looking unencumbered upon the other with a direct line of vision, apprehending this other as it exists. The former would constitute the equivalent of *visual* correspondence theory (after Aristotle, 1998), whereby the viewer "accurately" apprehends the other with



no consideration of the contribution of the seer to the "picture." According to Nietzsche's claim that "facts are precisely what there are not, only interpretations" (1967, p. 267), I assume that "objective" sight filters through the lens of a subjectivity. In panopticism, the gaze-returning potential is muted, turned into self-guarding. It is subject-objectifying. The individual looks upon herself with the imagined eye of guilt. A form of political action is suggested by the possibility of returning the erstwhile panoptic gaze. The action would shift the site/sight of struggle over ideas of public well-being from the individual—already presumed guilty of wastefulness, inefficiency, and sloth—and establish the visual space of judgment and action to an image-screen constituted by the sight/site of all. Concerned Canadians may reject the one-way, judgmental visibility of the panoptic gaze and replace it with a returning gaze of mutual visibility, so no more concealed interests can haunt "behind" the unseen places of the presumed gaze of the guard—typically private, corporate interests. Canadians may return the gaze and render all seen.

I do not describe viewers separated by some chasm. Certainly, "prisoners" would see the "guards" as they are apprehended and vice versa. However, a kind of a specular exchange would open up a plane of interactive visibility. The process would disrupt the singular, unitary gaze, the one-way gaze of control and judgment. The process suggests a new, visually interactive space, a space qualitatively different from one-way surveillance. It would blow surveillance wide open. Viewers would not gaze directly upon the other; they would meet at a third space between, an image screen of shared specularity. Viewers would not be visually portioned into presumeably discreet ontological categories (like those of classical use value) but see their hauntingly constituted mutuality.

Often, I, today, laboring with head down and eyes cast only upon the rails—as perhaps others do as well—miss the glare of those watching who would disrupt the space of public well-being so much appreciated by Tomkowicz. Perhaps I suggest something of my own longing naiveté toward the post-War ideal. When I always keep my eyes cast down upon my labor and my mind's eye directed towards "next year" (Kroiter and Daly, 1953), as does Tomkowicz, when I think of when I can retire and long to enjoy the fruits of my life of labour, when I work without looking up, I run the risk of missing the community around me. I risk seeing only those benefits I enjoy individually.

By focusing only on my labour and my future, I would not see the structural or discursive conditions that shape the very terms of my existence and how Tomkowicz's precious welfare state liberalism, among other things, functions as an instrument to manage, in the language of economics, the "externalities" (Blomqvist, Wonnacott, and Wonnacott, 1987, p. 95) of the operation of Capitalisms. Namely, I might miss how welfare state liberalism prepares people for labor and keeps them from making demands upon Capital once their bodies become too old and frail to offer for further extraction of value. I would not notice how some imaginaries of public well-being facilitate the dynamic nor see how the interests of Capital, which try ever to expand, will expand markets outward, beyond the borders of Canada, and inward, as well, into every corner of my life, even those sacred nooks where I keep my ideas of public well-being. When I do not look back and return the gaze, the hegemonic questions remain, "How can Capital extract more outputs for its inputs; how can it manage its externalities and minimize its necessary investitures?"

I identify three interpretations of public well being: that which I interpret from the film, that which is a territorialized space in service of Capital, and that which is the emergent possibility I argue for in this chapter. First, private interest overwrites the narrative of welfare state liberalism. It casts public well-being in terms of private interest, not a new idea (Smith, 1776/1991), but, especially since the Great Depression and for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, put on the back burner. Tomkowicz's sense of public well-being reflects the moderation of classical, *laissez-faire* liberalism and its transformation into "softer" models (Keynes, 1997). However, this moderation functioned as a means to manage the "externalities" of hundreds of thousands of poor and hungry, as well as the raised expectations of returning soldiers from World War II, and the ambitions of the labor movement after having witnessed the prosperity resulting from Wartime production. In the second interpretation, private interest again overwrites the narrative of 20<sup>th</sup> century liberalism—but this time, I characterize this overwriting another way. This interpretation presents a reading informed by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) of the forces of Capital reinscribing and reconfiguring the visual regime of Canadian self-identity in the liberal welfare state. Received ideas of public well-being become *territorialized* by private interests. The way I understand myself, the country, and the values I cherish has become socially organized through the culture of Capital. In the third interpretation (somewhat following the second), returning the gaze, as I have described it, would allow Canadians to *evacuate nomadically* the *territorialized* spaces created for them. As a form of political action, this strategy would not only allow a rethinking of, but also provide novel, supple language to de-articulate previous interpretations of public well-being and



create a plane of possibility for new articulations of political life. Such articulations would, after Derrida (1997), be not present, but upon us already.

How would the idea of an open space of specular exchange "look" and operate as a means to keep notions of public well-being alive? The Faculty of Arts at the University of Alberta houses the Parkland Institute research network. The Institute facilitates non-partisan research and dialogue oriented to the Canadian political economy and public policy. In many respects, Parkland functions as a voice of opposition to the Fraser Institute, which examines public policy very much within a market-based, neoliberal paradigm and, in that sense, represents the kind of territorializing gaze I have described. Parkland returns the gaze and provides an example of the kind of process I envision in this chapter.

The "restructuring," "reformulating," "reinventing," or neoliberal scaling back of the traditionally constituted public interest in the last 25 to 30 years has been a process trading freely in "clear answers." To the neoliberal gaze cast upon an allegedly hulking, untenable, bureaucratic apparatus, apparently about to buckle under the pressure and weight of its own "contradictions," "ineptitude," and "inefficiency," solutions come clear, fast, and easily—entirely too easily: "Cut back," "privatize," "get people back into the workforce." In smashing open established tracts of specular scrutiny and the private interests haunting them, the course of easy, clear answers may be set aside. By interrupting the "clear" line of vision, judgment, and narrativization, I hope to have problematized that kind of "clear" certainty. Optimistically, Canadians can broaden the range of the seen, the visible, the articulable, and create the circumstances for a different space of seeing values. We do not want to or cannot nostalgically reinsert or reinscribe

the old narratives of public well-being. Rather, if we can change the plane of what we see and render in narratives and the imaginary, we can reinvent, *re-view* public well-being before it becomes so altered as to be effectively cast from cultural memory while we continue sweeping the rails.



(Paul Tomkowicz: Street-Railway Switchman, n.d.)

## Chapter Nine:

### Shying Shyness: Haunting an Epidemiology

*Longing for the warmth of human companionship, hating her fears of others but powerless against them, there lies nothing ahead for her but years of loneliness: desolate, barren, empty—because she is shy.*

*Shyness* (Jackson & Daly, 1953)

When a child in school, I thought of myself as “shy,” and my memories bring me to the subject and film of this chapter. Today, as an educator, I try to think of shyness as not necessarily pathologic. The purpose of this chapter is to explore a text about shyness and to think through some of its assumptions. Socialization of children remains a substantial curricular and educational goal. When that goal fails, the failure is often ascribed to individual pathology. Such diagnosis both names a problem and creates it as a discursive object. *Shyness* is a classic National Film Board of Canada production. The documentary illustrates a mid-20<sup>th</sup> century perspective of shyness as a personally constituted and familially caused disease. The film reflects the notions of the “mental hygiene movement” (Low, 2002). A reading informed by Foucault (1972; 1994) will illustrate that the film (and the discourses in which it participates) reify and reaffirm shyness as pathology. Moreover, the process operates through three negative female stereotypes: the “spinster” and the “rejecting” and the “smothering” mother. I use the work of Jacques Derrida to rethink the film and its discourse. Specifically, I draw inspiration from “undecidability” (Derrida, 1976; 1981; 1982); the notion of the “wholly other” (“*tout autre est tout autre*” (1995a)); and an emergent, “as-of-yet-unheard-of



friendship" (Derrida, 1997, p. 1). I read a "fundamental" *oui* in regarding and respecting the other as other. Such regarding seeks to move beyond the "annihilation" resulting from efforts to reduce children to data and to force them into clinical models of shyness and allows for the haunting possibilities of the Other.

1.

*Shyness* (Jackson & Daly, 1953) is a classic National Film Board of Canada title, produced for The Mental Health Division, Department of National Health and Welfare, Ottawa. It is a sort of training or educational film for teachers (and parents). The film is situated very much within the tradition of the mental hygiene movement, a 20<sup>th</sup>-century school of thought, which saw psychiatrists and psychologists bringing to bear the insights of modern science to help in the development of individual children. Low (2002) describes the movement: "[T]he hygienist intent in American public schools was to make the teachers less rigid, moralistic, punitive, and authoritarian, and to make students happier in school, more successful, and, above all else, more sociable" (p. 123). Aspects of the movement became aligned with eugenics and hereditarianism (2002). Nonetheless, in *Shyness*' version of "mental hygiene," these calls, notably those of hereditarianism, are muted: "In the first place, if anyone's born shy, we all are" (Jackson & Daly, 1953).

Mental hygiene reflects the pedagogical movement of early Deweyian (Dewey, 1963) Progressivism—"child centred," vocationally, civically oriented activity-based pedagogy. Low (2003) cites Cohen: "[T]he NCMH cemented ties with the Progressive Education Association (PEA), then at the height of its influence, to co-opt the PEA, to make it a 'movement organization,'" The perspectives relate to each other in terms of

their mutual focus upon the ideal development of the individual child. Nevertheless, the movements are not identical or synonymous. Each has distinct histories and trajectories. Mental hygiene is rooted in Freudian Psychoanalysis, while Progressivism grows from Dewey's Humanist Pragmatism. The movements' impact and influence have varied over time, but *Shyness* illustrates their manifestation in a context of post-War English Canada.

2.

The film opens in a beautiful, pastoral setting. Children dance through the woodlands, bathed in sunshine. Nearby, the narrator, a thoughtful, compassionate, man sits under the shade of a large tree. Observing the activities of his charges, he ponders. This impeccably dressed, middle-aged man ruminates on the children and their healthy development. He thinks about shyness and the suffering it causes in the life of his adult cousin, Francis, who embodies the tragedy of shyness. Unable to develop the kind of human relationships she must have to satisfy her need for companionship, she wanders the streets at night, lonely and alone. Terrified of the glances of others, she wanders, peering into department store picture windows. Looking at the mannequins, draped in modern fashions, is the closest she can come to engaging with a person. She has nothing to fear from a mannequin, minked or otherwise. The narrator recounts his efforts to break her out of her fear and alienation. He and his family invite her to parties "because we're sorry for her" (Jackson & Daly, 1953). The film shows Francis fuddled and flabbergasted as a suitably aged gentleman approaches her to strike up a conversation. She looks away in frustrated ineptitude. He walks away with an undecidable look of ambiguity.



(1953)



(1953)

The narrator relates that Francis, because of her shyness, misses the good things she deserves. She finds herself unable to obtain employment in the field for which she is



trained. She is highly qualified and competent, but, in interviews, she manages only "to sound like a nobody" (Jackson & Daly, 1953). People much less qualified than she receive the jobs instead because they have confidence. Cousin Francis slinks away from an interview, accepting defeat, while an energetic, well-dressed applicant breezes into the office. In the film's world, because of Francis' shyness, Platonic justice (Plato, 1955) is violated. Not all are in their proper place. The otherwise virtuous Francis slinks away in shame, while the shame-less rise higher than they deserve. The narrator swears that he will do what he can to save the children in his care from mal-developing into this kind of *sickness*, into "the kind of unhappiness that is ruining [his] cousin's life" (Jackson & Daly, 1953).

Indeed, the man's well-meaning intentions are written across his face in lines of love, care, and pain because of every bit of undue suffering around him. However, he and the modern scientific insights of the sociometricians, psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors and the Child Guidance clinic, and all their good intentions, wrapped within the cloak of mental hygiene, do not take account of the genealogical range, contestations, exclusions, and potential recharacterizations of their account. Foucault (1994) contends, "Let us give the term 'genealogy' to the union of erudite knowledge and local memories which allows us to establish a historical knowledge of struggles and to make use of this knowledge tactically today" (p. 42). *Shyness* calls for a genealogy of its key, title-bearing term, the determination and diagnosis of "shyness" as a condition, in fact, as a serious mental and social health problem. A genealogy of shyness would concern itself with the excluded and marginalized explanations, accounts, and knowledge that the formation of shyness as a discursive object inaugurates. The film overtly dispenses with parenting and

teaching perspectives that, first, do not adhere to the scientific conceit of mental hygiene, and, second, disagree with science's findings.

In analyzing Francis and pathologizing her, the film/discourse imbues her with a trait of maladjustment—shyness. Moreover, the film and discourse epidemiologize the shyness into a quasi-public health problem. The function of this process reifies and reaffirms certain negative female stereotypes: in the case of Francis, that of the “spinster.” She is an unmarried woman, of “a certain age” (she seems to be in her early 30s, but with the “ravages” of shyness twisting her features, who can say?). The film presents her as an example of what can go wrong without the modern interventions of mental hygiene. The discursive exclusions of the film's determination of shyness cast the excluded knowledge as pariahic, moreover, as pariahic with a definite Patriarchal persuasion. First, the sites of excluded knowledge (femaleness) become either the disease or its cause. Those occupying subject positions at those sites become infected.

### 3.

The film goes on to examine the cases of three children: Robert, Anna, and Jimmy. Robert is an apparently contented boy. He is happy off on his own, at the edges of a group, experimenting and exploring. He appears to be happy, neat, and well adjusted. The film notes that nothing is wrong with him. He explores the world according to his own intellectual curiosity, and the narrator explains, “Our job is not to change him, but to help him develop further his own natural qualities” (Jackson & Daly, 1953). Anna and Jimmy, however, do not receive such a glowing diagnosis. Moreover, in both cases, the causes of their maladjustment, of their illness, invoke further negative female stereotypes.

Anna, the film contends, is a typical shy child. She lurks ever at the edge of things. She would like to join in, but, in the end, her fears prevent her from doing so. The cause of Anna's disease is clear and invokes the film's second negative stereotype: the "rejecting mother." The film notes that, like all children, Anna just wants to know that she is loved, that she is unconditionally accepted, especially by her mother. The young Anna sits upon the living room floor, at her mother's feet, looking up admiringly. Mother needlepoints in her impeccably appointed parlour. The little girl, evidently wanting to be like her parent, has a little needlepoint project of her own. Mother means well, the film reassures the audience, but like many parents, she gives her young child a job far too complicated for her. Mother just wants to bring Anna up properly, and sets high standards to stretch the young girl's abilities. Nevertheless, as is often the case, the narration laments, the assignment is much too complicated and Anna fails. The film emphasizes that, of course, Mother is proud of Anna, but, when a girl is so judged, she cannot help but fail:

Mother was very demanding, not understanding that children's abilities mature slowly. She would give her tasks far beyond the normal child's capacity [pause] at that age. Of course, she meant well. She wanted to bring up Anna properly, but too often, the result was that Anna failed. She was always failing.... (Jackson & Daly, 1953)

Mother snatches the botched needlepoint from the child and frustratedly starts ripping it apart—physically and verbally. Little Anna's face shows injured, wounded dejection. The message? "Mommy doesn't love me" (Jackson & Daly, 1953).



Later, some ladies come calling. They sip and delicately sample tea and biscuits with disciplined, back-straight manners as Mother announces that Anna will recite for them. Anna regresses to shy ineptitude before the strained politeness of her teatime audience. The ladies exchange glances, looking at each other's eyes, mapping the disaster—first for Anna, then for each other and for Mother, taking stock of the awkward failure, then back to Mother in uncomfortable apology. They leave the shame behind. Mother looks at Anna: why have you let me down?

Mother's look conveys, invokes, brings out an undecidability. Derrida's undecidability (1976; 1981; 1982) plays upon moments of textual ambiguity, of resistances to binaric "clarity." Undecidability calls upon the reader to choose, and with choice comes responsibility, responsibility for the implications of the choice. Is Mother supportive? Is she disappointed and ashamed? The undecidability is crucial for the functioning of the film. The layered ambiguity of Mother's look separates *Shyness* from being merely another industrial training film. The undecidability heralds the film as art. It also opens up, exposes, its discursive commitments.



(Jackson & Daly, 1953)

The film takes pains to state explicitly that Anna's mother loves her daughter and tries to do only what she thinks best for her. In this sense, the film attempts to naturalize, humanize the mother. It would show that she is not a villain, just a woman doing the best she can, but, nonetheless, a woman labouring under the *yoke of ignorance* and causing her child unnecessary suffering and, perhaps, like the life of cousin Francis, a life of utter failure and dejection. The film lends texture to the stereotype of the "rejecting mother," but reifies and reaffirms it nonetheless.

4.

The film also treats the shyness of Jimmy, who, as the film conveys, is *emotionally sick*. He is profoundly disturbed, and the psychologists and psychiatrists must initiate a dramatic intervention. Jimmy, and, indeed, his whole family (although, again, only mother—who smothers Jimmy with her "jealous" love—is mentioned) will

require counseling, therapy and parenting training. The teacher thought that Jimmy, basically, was a contented child, but certainly not an active part of the world around him, that is, until the world came too close: "The bustling, vigorous life around him didn't interest him (pause) unless it came too near" (Jackson & Daly, 1953). The other students did not mistreat Jimmy, but Jimmy appeared extremely afraid of them. As the film introduces the boy and his illness, he is sitting off on his own, keeping a safe distance from the other children. Nearby, a few boys are playing with a paddleball, laughing. The narrator assures the audience that they mean Jimmy no harm, but as they start to move toward him, he flees in terror. This exchange marks another key instance of undecidability. As the boys move closer, the image seems slightly incongruous to the narration. Do they look completely harmless and free from mal intent? I think not. Their look has a troublesome ambiguity.



(1953)





(1953)



(1953)

5.

I have here used, combined, concepts from Foucault and Derrida, but, hopefully, not in a simplistic way. I shall explain my thinking. Foucault writes of power and the processes by which discourse creates, not only subjects, but also objects as such (Foucault, 1972). Specifically of interest here, is the discursive creation of objects of inquiry and discipline. Of course, Foucault's focus, methods, and assumptions changed over time; but what I find inspiring is, as noted, the insight a Foucauldian analysis lends to the discursive delineation and disciplining of a clinical object, shyness, its frame of legitimation, and exclusion of other accounts.

I also find inspiration first, in Derrida's early concepts of linguistic instability (1976; 1981; 1982), and specifically, undecidability. Second, I deeply appreciate the later, ethical or political Derrida (1994; 1997), invoking spectral poetics and making tacit calls for a new, yet unarticulated ethical-political stance. I do not imply a Hegelian dialectical progression of Derrida's thought in moving from the former to the latter. Rather, I like to think of the changes in terms inspired by the Gnostic Gospel of Thomas, whereby the Kingdom of Heaven has always been here, only we have not had the eyes to see it (Meyer, 1992). "Derrida" did not suddenly become "political"; rather, his work came around to revealing his politics (although not as though the politics were "inside" the early work but, rather, haunting as an *other* constituting trace).

I bring Foucault and Derrida together, even though the combined work of the two thinkers may suggest an unhappy matrimony.

For Foucault, Derrida was a defender of the one form of understanding that would always remain the same, that would always produce holy wars in the name of

truth, and sanctified divisions between the experts and the ignorant [:] for Derrida, Foucault's subtle defense of the established order was the false promise of Utopia, an image which if pursued would always lead to disillusionment and the acceptance that nothing can ever change the way the world is. (Boyne, 1990, p.

4)

I think of these two philosophers differently than as a couple forced into resentful incompatibility. I prefer to *think openly* in order to *openly rethink* shyness. I focus not upon the divisions, but hope to map a generous-of-spirit mutual workability, a cartography of hope. The two philosophers, after all, share the common ground of power and ethics (1990).

I consider together Foucauldian genealogy and Derridean undecidability. The insights of genealogy lend confirmation to excluded multiplicities of texts. In the clinical determination of shyness, "unscientific" living (in the case of Francis) and teaching, and, especially, parenting—no, actually, mothering—emerges as vilified knowledge/practice. The film rhetorically mobilizes undecidability to create a troubling space including but not containing the fearful mind of the shy person as well as the concerned look of clinical compassion. However, the film as a discursive mechanism does not consider the possibility that while it may invoke undecidability, undecidability invokes the film's own unstable ground. By invoking its own polysemy, it opens a door that remains ajar. The three looks of ambiguity—those of Francis' potential suitor, the paddleball boys, and Anna's mother—reveal the troubling multiplicity of the social events. However, the looks do not admit a similar multiplicity concerning the filmic discourse's own position. They do not consider where the film unknowingly stands. One cannot stand everywhere, but,



indeed, one must stand somewhere. Of course, Foucault (1970) famously treats discursive specular positioning in the case of Diego Velasquez's painting *Las Meninas*. However, the undecidability at play in *Shyness* inadvertently destabilizes the implied subject position of mental hygienic goodwill.

The later Derrida (1994), discussing "Marx," suggests that more than any one single Marx haunts, not just Europe, but the apparent liberal triumphalism and new imperialism after the Cold War. Derrida calls for recognition of "Marxism's" endless play and possibility, rather than assertion of any necessary orthodoxy. Similarly, many shynesses haunt "shyness." Such Otherwises of shyness may also be framed as genealogical exclusions, aspects of shyness pushed from the foreground of clinical recognition (as manifested in the film)—shyness as a personality trait; shyness as a legitimate response to social cruelty and rejection; shyness as a personal inclination, as with Robert. Lacking a familiar narrative to explain shyness, such as that involving Robert's intellectual curiosity, shyness, here, becomes circumscribed as deviance. Indeed, mental hygiene viewed normalcy in terms of "functional" sociality. Low (2002) summarized accounts of the ideal, appropriately adjusted personality as "assertive, active, and, most of all, sociable" (p. 143).

6.

*Shyness* illustrates a site of discursive struggle. After World War II, much of English Canadian society underwent a sustained deepening and extending of what I will call the "modern project." In the years after the War, the economy was booming, returning soldiers were starting families, new subdivisions were sprawling out from the

urban centres, and consumer goods were becoming more widely available. This period was a time of much heady optimism, and science would play a role. Modern scientific management and industrial efficiency had been forces for some time, but they found new life in the optimistic post-War world—science would create better living! Child rearing would be no exception. Modern experts believed they could do much to improve the uninformed practices of the pre-modern parent.

Thus, a site of discursive struggle emerged. As noted, *Shyness* paints from a palette of stereotypes: the spinster and the smothering and the rejecting mothers. How shall I characterize the position articulating those stereotypes? Certainly, it would characterize itself as “modernizing,” as distinct and opposed to the pre-modern. It is tempting to signify the two positions as “male” and “female” discourses. The presumably male science vilifies female knowledge and practices as “unscientific.” However, the film’s psychologist, as a representative of modern science, who administers a sociometric test to the children is, indeed, a woman; and the nurturing teacher, as noted, is a man. *Shyness* retains a strand of warm progressivism; rendered even more pronounced when one considers its 1953 production date. Male teachers (such as myself) of elementary school children remain more the exception than the rule despite much rhetoric calling to change the situation. When I show up at a school for a substitute teaching assignment, people commonly say to me in strained perplexity, “It’s kindergarten, you know.”

Thus, the boundaries of a female-unscientific-premodern/male-scientific-modern cartography bear their own undecidabilities rather than chart a simply clear, dialectical progression from one to the other. The categories admit a certain slippage, or porousness, yet, the stereotyping whispers still, a ghost haunting the discourse. What is the nature of

the ghost? It evades enclosure. It escapes a capturing gaze, yet it reappears when one looks away. I invite it for analysis, yet it declines. I move closer—it retreats. It hovers about the edges of inquiry but then floats away. The stereotyping collapses upon itself in discursive irony—it succumbs to its own timidity; it eludes with its own “shyness.”

7.

*Shyness* concerns social processes. Mental hygiene focuses upon well-developed individuals and measures them largely in terms of their successfully fitting into an idea of the cohesive social group. In the classroom in *Shyness*, categories of social difference such as class, gender, culture, and others are either not a factor or not discussed. Social difference and differences in social power and status are not treated. The teacher initiates a regular discussion session in class. The students explore whatever they wish. The teacher frames the sessions as “training for democratic living.” In these sessions, Anna learns that the other students are not so different from her after all. Notably, all the students have a fear: Madge is afraid of bats; Carl, whom the others admire for his strength, fears snakes; Walter, the class leader, fears high places; and Patsy is afraid of the bogeyman. Anna realizes that she and the other children cannot be as dissimilar as she had thought: She realizes “she wasn’t so different after all” (Jackson & Daly, 1953).

8.

That the characters in question, cousin Francis, Anna, and Jimmy, do not fit into the cohesive social group is construed and epidemiologized as a personal, individual pathology. However, the cause of the pathology is itself social. Their shyness is social:



they get the pathology from their parents; specifically, they get it from their mothers.

Schoolchildren commonly feel out of step with their peers. However, reducing shyness to a personal epidemiology, a disease caused by one's parent—one's mother—constitutes a clear reductionism. In *Shyness*, broader social processes of difference and power (such as those related to gender, class, and status) come to be let off the hook of responsibility for social fissure while discursively suspect culpabilities are perceived to be at fault.

## Chapter 10:

### **Haunting Inquiry Identifies the Ideology of Modern Scientific Management, Desire's Implication in Youth Popular Culture, and Beckoning toward the Unheard**

In the readings of the films so far, I have employed Haunting Inquiry to discern issues related to social inequality, war and conflict, and clinical assumptions. This chapter of readings examines hauntings in three films: *Windbreaks on the Prairies* (Cherry, 1943), in which ideology problematizes an account of a government program to establish trees on prairie farms; *Lonely Boy* (Koenig & Kroiter, 1962), which reveals the undercurrents of desire in seminal popular culture; and *Keep Your Mouth Shut* (McLaren, 1944), which demands silence in times of war and propaganda. A picture emerges of haunting Otherises to some of the key organizing fantasies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including the conceit that science leads to continual progress, that adolescent attachments are naively simplistic, and that civic discourse profitably curtails individuality for the greater good. The chapter also concludes by clarifying how these readings mobilize and develop Haunting Inquiry.

**1. *Windbreaks on the Prairies* (Cherry, 1943) Haunts with the Ideological  
Implications of the Aesthetics of Modern Scientific Management and its Failures**

"Trees planted today will gladden the heart as they grow with the children, a symbol of that future when man's will, and the beauty of nature will make the prairies beautiful."

*Windbreaks on the Prairies*



*(Brise-vent des Prairies n.d.)*

Traveling across Alberta, I often see peculiar stands of trees, jaggedly jutting out from the flat prairie. Closer inspection reveals houses within. In hard times of drought, low grain prices, and BSE, the trees hide houses aging, unmaintained, and sometimes abandoned. The classic National Film Board of Canada documentary *Windbreaks on the Prairies* illustrates how scientific change influenced the representations of trees. At one time, prairie farmers disliked trees, but, eventually, soil erosion and economic hardship



demanded the valuing of trees as shelterbelts and windbreaks. Informed by this latter perception, this section opens into a managerial reading of nature, an ideological ecologism, which, despite its conceit to the contrary, perpetuates environmental, economic, and human distress.

One might gather from my sentimental recollection of seeing the lines of trees and patches of brush girding farms across the prairies that I both grew up on a farm and have conservative longings for aspects of the heritage of rural cultures. Neither assumption is true. Nonetheless, many of my extended family members farm in northern Alberta, and I can recall early visits to their homes. These experiences drew me to the film and led to its inclusion in this thesis. I have noted from a distance the changes and, at times, the destruction of family farming throughout the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and today. Certainly, hard economic times challenge farmers. Many must seek full-time employment off the farm to sustain it, which often not only fails to produce a net profit, but also requires capital influx to prevent foreclosure.

Before I discuss the film, I must comment on some of its haunting assumptions. The first lines casually comment upon the white man driving the Indian from the plains. Of course, the offhandedness of the statement bespeaks callousness. The insensitivity continues with the apparent assumption that plains history began with those events. The film does not mention them again, and the narrative proceeds with an account of Canada's continued colonization of both human and natural geography. The discourse that proceeds frames itself largely in terms of scientific management. The centre of the film elaborately explains the activities at the "Indian Head" facility.

First, prairie farmers had little or no use for trees: "Most new settlers saw little value in trees, for their ambition was to clear the land as quickly as possible and sow grain" (Cherry, 1943). The film details this disregard, for the priority was clearing land for agricultural production:

As the land hunger reached to the park belt and grey bush areas, the trees fell before the settler's axe. In the rush to clear the land, there was no time to regret the falling tree. And so the great park belt areas lost their trees, and, when in the 30s, farm prices were depressed and living difficult, on many a bush farm, the sale of wood kept the family in food and clothing. (Cherry, 1943)

The film implies that no one missed the destroyed trees at that point.

However, that situation changed when the trees' value to the prairie's economic project became more apparent:

As the denuding of the park belt became more general, the problem was even more serious than on the treeless prairie, for the grey bush soils were lighter, and when their natural coverage was removed, they lay exposed to both wind and water erosion. There was no protection against the dry years, which were inevitably a part of prairie living. And so, when an unprecedented drought struck the western plains, both prairies and park belt soil lay unprotected against the winds. (Cherry, 1943)

Only when the unchecked winds and the ravages from aggressive overuse of the soil impeded agricultural production and profit did the clearing out of the trees become recognized as a problem. Apparently, the newly cleared agricultural lands were a source

primarily of pride, upon which the West grew, and the East flourished. At that point, appreciation of the trees depended upon their use value (Marx, 1992). Although the trees that the farmers removed were not exactly "commodities," their interpreted value emerged only in their physical properties insofar as they contributed to the agricultural production of wheat. Once the dearth of trees was recognized as a problem for the prairies' economy, they became the subject of a vigorous reinterpretation. Trees became recast as instruments of capital insertion. To support the agricultural industry, the Canadian government put itself into the business of producing and distributing trees to farmers.

Toward this end, the film depicts a managerial reading of nature. I call it an "ideological ecologism." I define the term as an invocation of a romantic, preindustrial, premodern sense of nature that conceals the program's economic, capitalistic function of enhancing agricultural production. Moreover, despite the government tree program's purported grounding in employing modern scientific management to improve life, the program actually correlates with environmental, economic, and human hardship, as the continuing trouble on the farms has suggested.

The film's nexus of modern scientific management and ideological ecologism results in a romantic evocation of the premodern. This romanticism manifests itself especially in the lush harp music and rich images in the last three minutes of the film—birds feeding their young, a woman picking fruit, and cool, peaceful, tree-cast shadows caressing the dusty road: "As one pioneer woman who has drawn many trees says, 'Without trees, we'd have left our farm long ago. To us, trees are the hope of the Earth, like healthy children to a home'" (Cherry, 1943). Thus, the ideological project obscures



itself. A new, apparent use value is inscribed, written, onto the trees. The trees reemerge as sources of aesthetic pleasure. They become metonymic repositories for flourishing fertility among farm families: "Trees planted today will gladden the heart as they grow with the children, a symbol of that future when man's will and the beauty of nature will make the prairies beautiful" (Cherry, 1943). Ideologically, the government program positions the trees as closing the ecological loop ruptured by the deforestation and denuding of the prairies. The government overwrites the apparent use value with romantic ecologism.

Dual aspects emerge: material and ideological. The material conditions regress as the environment erodes. Despite more than a half century of agricultural- and resource-focused scientific management, global ecological distress looms. In addition, prairie agriculture remains ever on the brink of catastrophe, exacerbated by new forms of environmental challenge, such as BSE, which themselves emerge concomitantly with scientific agricultural production and management.

The ideological element proceeds from the film's fetishization of trees. The romantic evocations partly conceal the trees' broadly constituted exchange value and instrumentality as Capital in agricultural production. Of course, the film makes no secret of the instrumental and economic use of the trees. However, the co-existing romantic aesthetic seems to mobilize a kind of Zizekian (Zizek, 1989) fantasy. The trees' "concealed" status as Capital coexists with the veiling narrative on the surface of the film. We see both scientific management and romantic effusion. The fantasy works to the extent that the government tree program becomes indissolubly associated with, even overwritten by, the romantic ecologism of the piece. Thus, this reading of *Windbreaks on*

*the Prairies* reveals a managerial operationalization of nature, an ideological ecologism, which, as stated, despite its conceit to the contrary, correlates with the problems it seeks to control.



*(Brise-vent des Prairies n.d.)*

**2. *Lonely Boy* (Koenig and Kroiter, 1962) Haunts with Anxiety over Young Desire**

*"I think that they kind of feel if I'm singing like a lonely boy, they like to feel, well, they're the girl I'm singing about."*

Paul Anka in 1962 National Film Board of  
Canada Production *Lonely Boy*



*(Lonely Boy, n.d.)*

In today's media-saturated world, popular entertainers occupy a profound place in the imaginaries of children, youth, teachers, and researchers alike. However, such artists seem to be symbolic faces of elaborate, vertically integrated networks of global marketing machinery, rather than singular musicians, actors, and dancers. Britney Spears, Justin Timberlake, and Eminem function not so much as individual performers than as the visible brands of transnational global industries. The ubiquity of such culture and its apparent influence support *Lonely Boy's* inclusion in my study. This section undertakes a



Haunting Inquiry into *Lonely Boy*. I explore the function of mass media entertainment to provide a venue for young desires and how this insight may be useful for educators concerned with media literacy. Indeed, I argue that media become a repository and site for young dreams, identities, and desires.

I consider Jacques Lacan's (2001) conception of desire and Slavoj Žižek's (1989; 1997) discussion of fantasy as ideology and assume that human subjects emerge in culture while longing after impossible desires, which commercial consumerist culture both sate and fuel. Typical approaches to media education study focus upon media institutions (Hoskins and McFadyen, 1996), effects (McQuail, 2000), uses and gratifications (McQuail, Blumler, and Brown, 1972), ideology (Marx and Engels, 1964), hegemony (Gramsci, 1971), the culture industry (Adorno, 1991), technological determinism (McLuhan, 1964), cultural studies (Hall, 2001), gender (Winship, 1987), reception (Fiske, 1989), and Baudrillardian images of images (Baudrillard, 1994). These approaches provide valuable insights into youth and media. However, the present section works with some recent contributions by Jan Jagodzinski (2002; 2004), taking up a psychoanalytic reading of desire, fantasy, and young peoples' psychic investments in media. Why do youth experience their particular responses to media? The "unconscious" as a heuristic understanding provides a way to question and probe such responses. I argue that deep needs become caught up in vertiginous popular media. This argument presents an important insight as students increasingly bring media into the classroom, not so much in direct symbolic manifestations such as DVDs and MP3s, but as part of whom the students are and are becoming. This development underlines the importance of this present section. As an aside, I share that my great grandfather was a farmer who

possessed very little formal education but admired it tremendously. He used to say of education that it is not heavy to carry around with you. The same may be said of youth's relationships to media. They are not heavy to carry around, and they go almost everywhere youth go—not so much just in their playback devices, but in their heads, their hearts, and their identities.

Back in 1962, in an arguably simpler time, the NFB's innovative Studio B produced a little film experimenting with *cinema verite* techniques, investigative candor, and suggestions of sociological sweep—a film called *Lonely Boy*. Few Canadians younger than fifty years old are likely to have much extensive knowledge or memory of Paul Anka, who was, in his time, a global youth phenomenon in his own right and, of course, Canadian. In some ways, Anka suggested a precursor to much of today's "manufactured" media culture. The film reveals that Anka had undergone plastic surgery to improve his appearance. He had lost weight, and combed his hair a new way over a period of a year and a half. His manager gushes over Anka's features. The singer explains that in order to succeed beyond a certain level in his business, one has to have appeal—one has to look like one is in show business. Anka's manager discusses his having groomed the youth for success and notes that Anka no longer even belongs to himself.

*Lonely Boy* affords access and insights into the apparently overflowing, pleasurable pain of Anka's young fans as they scream, "I love you" at his concerts. In Lacanian terms, their response illustrates their *jouissance*. Anka explains:

On the subject of girls, you ask me about the reaction? Well, I'll tell you, this, um, business that I'm in, um, I would say 60% of it is on emotion and, uh, a word which we all know and I am not in accord to using, but it's the only one which

can sum up what I have to say, which is 'sex.' As far as the girls who turn out and scream, which is what you mean, and stand there and cry and things like that, uh, it is something I wouldn't knock. It is something that I am not against. It is something that I don't disapprove of. It is something I am very happy of. And I think that they kind of feel if I'm singing like a lonely boy, they like to feel, well, they're the girl I'm singing about. (Koenig and Kroiter, 1962)

Mass media entertainment provides venues for young desires. Psychoanalytic theory offers some useful insights into desire. A Lacanian (Lacan, 2001) view might suggest that a split subject, a self alienated against itself, may futilely and forever pursue various objects of desire as a way to fill a psychic split, a fundamental emptiness incurred upon entering the symbolic order, the world of language and culture. Zizek (1997) discusses features of fantasy, in terms of how it provides the forms of representation, means, or "formula" for personal desire. In addition, "drive" enters Zizek's formulation as the call to remain forever in the overflowing moment of *jouissance*. It is the call to stay as close to the limits of fantasy's ability to maintain itself before opening to "the enigma of the Other's desire" (p. 31). An example is a prisoner who loves the idea of escaping so much that she or he wishes forever to climb just to the top of the wall without going over to freedom. By loving the act of escaping so much, s/he remains a prisoner forever. A person may love love so much, that he or she can never be in love. Actual love would be too much of a disappointment compared to the breathless experience of being ever on the verge of it. Why do romance stories and movies typically end immediately after the couple decides to marry? Is the reason that, to the person who loves the idea of falling in love, that when the two characters overcome all the obstacles to their love, their story



seems no longer compelling? Seen this way, the young fans in *Lonely Boy* do not need nka, but their desire for him.

This insight is useful for educators concerned with media literacy, for they need to understand how deeply young people engage with media beyond merely making a “market choice.” Young people’s powerful, if at times mysterious attachments to media, may be seen as having less to do with media themselves, than with the young people. This insight can serve to allay “moral panic” over what media kids engage with, although my argument is not intended to excuse blatantly violent, racist, sexist, and homophobic media. Rather, this insight allows for the consideration of the psychic investment involved in youth’s attachments to media—another perspective to consider. Here, the pedagogical/curricular question becomes not so much “What is your response to this media?” but “Why is your response to this media?”



(*Lonely Boy*, n.d.)

### 3. A Haunting Reading of *Keep Your Mouth Shut* (McLaren, 1944) Beckons

#### Educators to Hear the Unspeakable

*[Ohio Secretary of State] Ken Blackwell estimated that 25 percent of Bush's raw vote in Ohio came from white evangelicals. 'Because people of faith voted their values, their beliefs and their convictions, we have for the first time since 1988 a president who won a majority of the popular vote,' [Richard] Land said. (Strode, 2004)*

*I really believe that the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, People For the American Way - all of them who have tried to secularize America - I point the finger in their face and say 'You helped this happen.' ("Right wing watch," 2004)*

Reverend Jerry Falwell on 9/11

*I hope I live to see the day, when, as in the early days of our country, we won't have any public schools. The churches will have taken them over again and Christians will be running them. What a happy day that will be! (Falwell, 1979, pp. 52-53)*

Reverend Jerry Falwell

While a pre-service teacher, I felt that Education, while certainly requiring an academic component, did not manifest itself as primarily intellectual in nature. It was

social, yes, and rightly so. It was emotional, agreed. However, I felt that my chosen profession was an indissolubly moral phenomenon, and I, for some mysterious reason, felt ever wanting before it. Today, "morality" seems in the air more strongly than ever and affects my selection of the present film. This section analyzes morally charged cultures of silence in times of war by using a theoretical frame informed by work of Jacques Derrida (1997). I argue that even in a war culture, we should not try to silence people but listen attentively to them.

In this time of war, tensions often run high. We have a sense of general threat from without. Keep your mouth shut. How did this situation happen? I recently viewed the theatrical trailer for the remake of H.G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds* starring Tom Cruise and directed by Steven Spielberg. The trailer hints at a thematic updating. The poster's tagline reads: "They're already here" (Internet Movie Database Inc, 2005a). According to the trailer (Internet Movie Database Inc, 2005b), the invaders have been among us, watching us, observing our customs, probing for weaknesses. When we least expect them, they attack. The Other among us becomes the enemy.

Notwithstanding the U.S. policy of preemption in Iraq, one does not fire upon an "enemy" who has not fired yet, but one can put up defenses. Self-defense is, arguably, a nation's right, and defenses take many forms. The proposed North American Missile Defense Shield presumeably is one. Advanced screening procedures at airports are another. To close down a culture is yet another. McLaren's film presents an argument for a certain kind of wartime silencing. Reverend Falwell's comments above about the cause of 9/11 present another. Scapegoating assigns blame and marginalizes the targeted groups' voices. To be fair, Falwell later apologized ("Falwell Apologizes," 2001).



Moreover, I confess my own guilt in sometimes reducing and demonizing various groups associated with Falwell. So-called "values voters" were reportedly instrumental in delivering electoral victory to the incumbent U.S. President in November 2004 (Strode, 2004). The values in question were largely same-sex marriage and abortion. I admit feeling outraged. Were not 100,000 dead in Iraq a "values issue?" What of the millions without health insurance, while the richest in society were being given tax cuts? Is that contrast not a "values issue" as well? As the so-called "War on Terror" rages, so do the reputed culture wars in the United States and Canada. Divisions over cultural values, as the above quotations infer, mark the *polis* deeply. Public schools are also involved in these debates, for a public school is one of the few places where people of wide diversity come together in public life; and, moreover, where children come together. Thus, community emotions and investments run high, and cultural struggle in a time of war reaches the schools' curriculum. This section does not offer a solution, a formula for success, or a strategy for management, but does offer some unconventional thinking about finding a way to work together in a morally charged war culture.

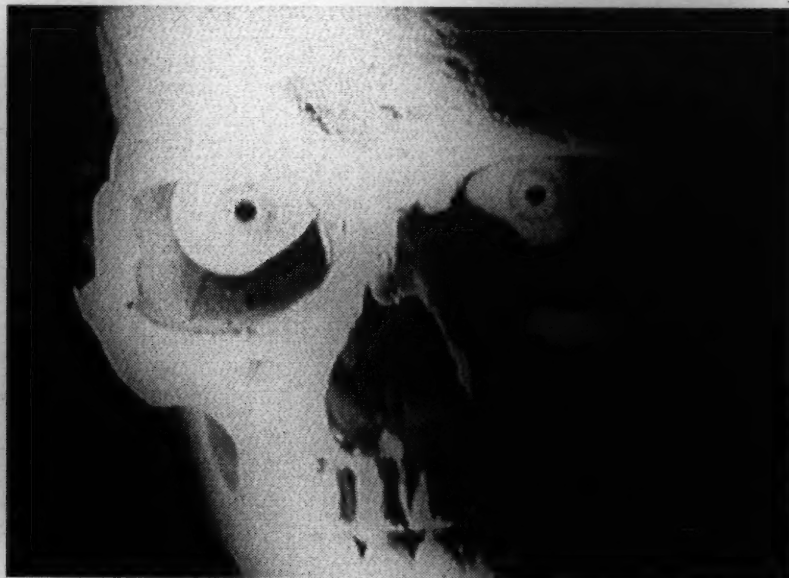
Much has been written on teaching in a time of war. A recent *Rethinking Schools* editorial contemplated responses to a "Teaching about the War" feature (*Rethinking Schools*, 2002): "Among our critics, some feel that schools should focus on the traditional curriculum and ignore world events. Others argue that controversial issues may be studied in the classroom so long as instruction is 'balanced,' and the teacher remains 'neutral'" (*Rethinking Schools*, 2003). The piece questions the calls for providing a "balance" between the two sides as forcing a false dichotomy upon the issue. Calls for balance are at times mobilized by people in positions of authority to simplify debate and

squelch diversity of views. I agree with that claim and extend it to consider the political and rhetorical impact of listening. Balance is a worthy virtue, a valuable principle. However, as a principle, it should function as a basement level. Balance should not be the loftiest height, the greatest aim, but a basement though which things cannot fall lower, not a ceiling to block out the stars.

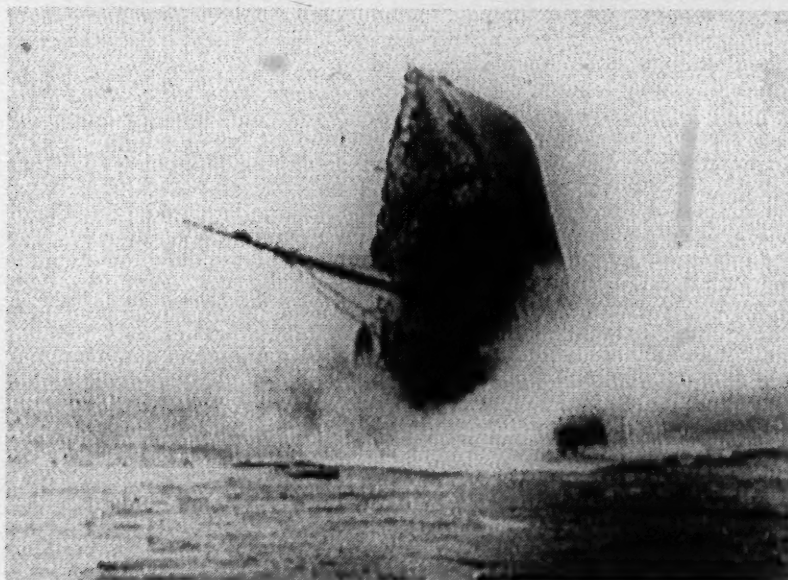
Granted, Canada is not in the U.S., from where the opening quotations emanated, but when a fire burns to the south, Canadians smell smoke, feel heat, and ponder about their own home. In that spirit, I attend to the war-culture in the U.S. As the quotations suggest, a sort of conservative return, a retreating to "traditional values" is evident among many Americans. Even popular television's proliferation of home decorating/renovating programs suggests a turn inward within the walls of the national border, home, or family.

In this time of war and conservatism, a culture of unspeakability simultaneously emerges. Some "unspeakables" become at times muted. Others, like Falwell's quotations, find a voice. Nonetheless, unspeakability is not a new feature of war culture. In 1944, the National Film Board of Canada, then arguably the Commonwealth's most "dependable" producer of Wartime propaganda, released a 2-minute film by Academy Award winner Norman McLaren, treating silence. *Keep Your Mouth Shut* (McLaren, 1944) features a Fascist skull "congratulating" viewers for gossiping about information in public places. Spies lurk everywhere, and, literally, "Loose-lips sink ships." A casual conversation between two women leads to a sinking. "Uncircumspect" chatter in the tavern causes a storehouse fire. A fragment of talk triggers a disastrous battle for Canadian forces. The film chides the loose-talkers, "[T]he Axis wishes to thank you for your magnificent

service. Carry on gossipers and blabbers. Your careless remarks kill Canadians." The film repeats its titular warning: "Keep your mouth shut!" (1944).



(Keep Your Mouth Shut, n.d.)



(n.d.)



A way out of the morally charged war culture of silence is through listening. As Derrida's (1997) *Politics of Friendship* shows, we have had quite enough talk of "friendship." I recall the pitiful ability of all this talk to erode enmity, to forge a way out of war. We have had quite enough of talking. It is time to start listening, and listening is more than just silence. I do not critique the film specifically for its message of tactical silence *per se*. I read the film as opening to implications regarding demands for cultural silence in the "War on Terror." Tactical silence has a place but fails as a definitive basis for teaching in a time of war, especially when statements like Falwell's seem to flow freely. Silence so someone else can talk has not worked.

When all listen, calls for friendship can subside—the deafening clatter of calls for friendship, which, with its trace of enmity, has served 2500 years of Western conflict as an apparently benign linchpin of political existence. Moreover, when political speech ceases to plow the soil in the same furrows, then a necessary precondition for something new to take root can emerge. Derrida's book announces a "vision of that future, of an unheard-of friendship...not present but...already upon us, at the end of philosophy and on the threshold of philosophies and politics to come" (1997, back cover). How important to note that this new friendship is not "unspoken of." The new friendship is, rather, "unheard of." It does not wait for someone to speak it. It waits for someone, some educator perhaps, to hear it. A curricular difference emerges between simply keeping one's mouth shut and keeping one's ears open.

#### 4. Haunting Inquiry Opens to the Otherwise of Influential 20<sup>th</sup> Century Ideas

In this chapter, I have read three films. They deal (respectively) with modern scientific management, adolescence, and civic discourse. My reading of *Windbreaks on the Prairies* (Cherry, 1943) reveals ideological implications in a government tree program. The film presents an exemplar of rigorous scientific resource management within an aesthetic of romantic ecologism. The contradiction between the two paradigms provides an opening for haunting instabilities in each. *Lonely Boy* (Koenig and Kroiter, 1962) profiles Paul Anka at the peak of his popularity as a teen idol. The film haunts with desire and opens to a reading of youth media education more extensively focused than simply educating about market choice. My reading leaves fewer answers than questions, specifically concerning the issue of not "What is youth's response to media?" but "Why?" *Keep Your Mouth Shut* (McLaren, 1944) demonstrates an example of WWII propaganda demanding public silence. I read the film in relation to morally charged cultures of silence in the War on Terror and its attendant longings for a return to conservatism. I argue that a compelling way to access the unspeakable comes not from trying to speak it in ever new and innovative ways, but to listen for it.

Assumptions about Haunting Inquiry contribute uniquely to these readings. These Otherises are neither entirely absent or present. They require a certain hermeneutic operation for their access. However, this comment does not mean that the hermeneutic locates some essentially true nature, character, or understanding of the films. Rather, the operation opens to certain troubling occurrences in the texts and the way they interact with the reader (myself) and my attendant readings of history, politics, and the curriculum. The troubles are a haunting return that first requires a visitation (by the

reader) to the structure in which they dwell (the text). A haunting cannot revisit (revisiting is what hauntings do, after all) unless one first visits their location. One must enter a haunted house by opening the door. These readings also open toward possibilities beyond the texts and their documentary assumptions. Reading the films outside their historical contexts (as I have) already involves a certain repurposing. Reading them as a curricular resource today distances them from their original contexts of public information, exposé, and propaganda. Such recontextualization suggests an opening toward their Otherwises in terms of both purpose and message.

Haunting Inquiry provides advantages not found in other critical frames. As I have established early in my thesis, Haunting Inquiry owes much to Derrida's Hauntology. Derrida (1994) put forth the term as a means to read and access spectres of Marx. Hauntology accesses something beyond the ontological and multiple character of "Marx," so Haunting Inquiry is grounded already in a certain Marxian frame. However, the grounding distinguishes itself from other Marxisms—early, late, humanist, scientific, Gramscian, Lukacsian, Althusserian, and others. The grounding distinguishes itself precisely because of its ungrounded nature. Spectres do not walk upon the ground as do mortals. The grounding is ungrounded. Haunting brings Marx as *background* toward the *foreground*.

These readings contribute to the development of Haunting Inquiry. My reading of *Windbreaks on the Prairies* (Cherry, 1943) highlights aesthetic contradiction as an entryway into the text. Such an opening becomes as a passage through which to enter the text as a "haunted house." Those intent on exploring hauntings require a way into troubled architectures. Aesthetic contradiction provides one such route, resembling the



case of a person who professes one thing but whose eyes "say" quite another. The articulated message provokes a sense of its incongruence with the visual. *Lonely Boy* (Koenig and Kroiter, 1962) considers what haunts the viewer and moves response inquiry toward secret longings. Haunting Inquiry provides a way to explore a shared spectral (rather than phantomic) secret between text and viewer. The secret may linger unbeknownst to either, but its unknown quality does not prevent it from lurking, haunting, and whispering in the ear of one's response to a text. My reading of *Keep Your Mouth Shut* (McLaren, 1944) contributes to Haunting Inquiry the insight that a text's unsaid can speak louder than the formally articulated. My reading of the film's call to silence opens to broader cultural and political implications. The unsaid haunts the spoken. Ironically, it also haunts the unspoken. How does one hear the unsaid of the unspoken? Well, not by speaking louder. Haunting Inquiry provides a means to listen actively, creatively—it provides the possibility for a language of listening. Haunting Inquiry helps identify lurking Otherises and opens to hopeful possibilities beyond them.

## Chapter 11:

### **Haunting Inquiry Opens to the Aporetic Mourning of Memory's Other**

Haunting Inquiry is a linguistic conceptual framework to guide the reading of classic NFB documentaries to support the curriculum. In some ways, this "support" includes undermining the curriculum, especially its ideological and metaphysical assumptions. Curriculum theorists (Chambers, 1999; Norquay 2000; Sumara, Davis, & Laidlaw 2001) have argued that the makers of curriculum must recognize its debt to and implication in place. I agree and also accept the sometimes under-appreciated proposition that curriculum, developed and implemented in a specific place, does not float freely above geography. Curriculum, inseparable from place, mobilizes a knowledge/place relationship, creating an ethical obligation to places and their hauntings. Memory serves as one opening to a place's hauntings, specifically, memory's uncanniness. Memory, in a sense, is often a failure. It fails to capture events and, indeed, places. Memory ever includes a shifting, fluid Other, which haunts the very experience and possibility of memory by lurking beyond the limits of consciousness. Memory's Other is often unrecognizable, and it often returns unexpectedly. One can mourn—or attempt to mourn—lost places, places in which one dwells only in memory. The Others of memory-places similarly haunt. Moreover, mourning further troubles with its aporetic impossibility. This final chapter of readings uses two NFB films, the loss of my childhood home, and the work of Alcorn (2002) to reflect upon mourning and memory. I develop mourning-as-aporia as the groundwork for recognizing the haunting character of the aporetic mourning of memory's Other and how this character situates Haunting Inquiry's implications for learning, which involve a call for patience toward haunting.

1.



*City of Gold* (Low & Koenig, 1957)

*City of Gold* (Low & Koenig, 1957), while disavowing ghosts of place, nonetheless conjures them. *City of Gold* is an award-winning NFB production, which reminisces amongst scenes of ruins. The film is one of the first documentaries I turned to (or perhaps it turned to me?) in my preliminary explorations of these films. It evokes some of my own experiences of haunting, aporetic mourning, and place-memory. The film helped me as a point of early germination, and this chapter represents much growth and development of the ideas it evokes. I choose *City of Gold* for this section of the chapter because of its rich opening toward hauntings of place and past. The film remembers, from the apparent ghost town of “modern” Dawson City, the Gold Rush of 1897. Narrator Pierre Berton recounts that—as a child playing among the ruins of



abandoned hotels, dance halls, and riverboats—he never imagined that any of them meant anything. He ponders: “No ghosts of the past return to haunt us, here in these silent rooms” (1957). However, I have a different experience. In the following section of this chapter, I reflect upon learning that my childhood neighbourhood, an old army base, was to be demolished. I set about meandering through the neglected fields and derelict structures, taking pictures, and saying good-bye. I realized, with camera in hand and standing before dusty windows and kicked-in walls, that I was making meaning. I made stories, narratives by which this place would live on within me. Through these stories of place, I shook hands with its ghosts. In the present chapter, I argue that by weaving spectral stories of people, places, ideas, and dreams no longer with me, I can help keep past hope(s) alive—and not give up the ghost!



“No ghosts of the past return to haunt us, here in these silent rooms.” (Low & Koenig, 1957)

Official curriculum documents are typically clear, "present," scientific, and in their moments of evaluation, ordered according to rigorous behavioral analysis.

However, as I have asked elsewhere in this thesis, what is it that evades, exceeds, and remains ever beyond the words of the official document?

I present an example from the Ontario Media Arts curriculum:

Media arts is an emerging arts subject area that represents a new aesthetic model and extends traditional art forms. It may involve new ways of creating traditional art forms or innovative ways of using traditional arts to create what can be called 'hybrid' forms of art. In fact, hybridization is a characteristic of many forms of media art. Media art works may also involve interaction with the viewer and include, for example, interactive installations, robosculpture, performance art, simulations, and network art (e.g., art transmitted over the Internet). Some forms of media art involve virtual environments, and these include art produced with laser projections and holography. Other forms include video art, photocopy art, neon art, and computer graphics. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2000)

This brief statement represents an important incorporation of media as a subject area into the curriculum. It situates media within the arts—an apparently natural placement. After all, much media are art and works of aesthetic achievement. For example, *City of Gold*, as a film, is many things, including an historical meditation. Moreover, today, the 1957 film is an historical document in its own right. It is a "biopic." It is a family genealogy. It is a documentary. However, the film is also a work of art. An art-based approach, informed by an understanding of visual culture, is an important entryway into appreciating the film.

However, a "complete" reading of *City of Gold* involves much more than that understanding alone. The film's opening and closing sequences, shot in the Dawson City of 1957, are haunting and evocative. Soaked in sunshine, the air rich with floating pollen suggests a fertile environment. The fecundity seems to contradict the apparent barrenness of the town. Modern Dawson, despite the children playing baseball, the folks in the café, and the old-timers chatting on the sidewalk lingers in many respects as a *ghost town* due to its haunting evocations of empty hotels, grounded riverboats, and deserted saloons. The centre of the film, that part bookended by the contemporary Dawson sequences, proceeds with music, the voiceover narration of Pierre Berton, and the use of still photographs. The pictures, moments frozen in time, seem animated and brought to life. Erstwhile silent ghosts haunting the stills are exorcized by the filmmakers' craft. To read this film, to "illuminate" it with a counter narrative, I use a *ghost story*—and Haunting Inquiry is helpful.



**2. My Childhood Home Invokes Haunting, Even More So After the Loss of its  
Physical Manifestation.**



The Place of My Family Home—Before



The Place of My Family Home—After

(a)

I have found my places, my haunts, disturbingly impermanent. During my childhood, my family lived in military housing in Private Married Quarters on Canadian Forces Base Griesbach in Edmonton, Alberta. I once had ambivalent feelings about this place, but I have grown to love it. Recently, the Griesbach lands were sold for private redevelopment (Canada Lands Company Limited, n.d.; Warson, n.d.). While workers were digging up and razing the entire neighbourhood, I revisited it, veering past mounds of dirt and excavated basements, and photographed what was happening. My pictures document violence not only upon the land, the architecture, the neighbourhood, and the community, but also upon my imagination, my sense of that place and of myself in it.

I was not surprised at the neighbourhood's demolition. For years, people had been saying that Griesbach had fallen into a state of disrepair, and a friend had commented that it had started to turn into a slum. At the time, I was surprised to hear that statement, for I still saw the place through my ten-year-old eyes, as it had appeared in the 1970s.

In a local newspaper, the *Edmonton Examiner*, I first read that people from all over Alberta would be descending upon the base to inspect and purchase the old buildings. They were considered "derelict" and "no longer used," a perception suggesting a narrow definition of "use." The buildings' original inhabitants may have been gone, yet their ghosts still lingered. Moreover, the buildings themselves habitate, for they now inhabit my imagination. They lurk, linger, whisper, and keep me company, dwelling in me, just as I remember dwelling in and among them.

At Griesbach, my Grade 5 teacher seemed to be about 100 years old. I simultaneously feared and admired him, for according to his stories, he had been just about everywhere and done everything - a slightly incongruous proposition since he also seemed to have been teaching forever at Major General Griesbach School.

Of all his stories, the one that gave me the most profound sense of wonder was about the Griesbach lands, which, he claimed, had once been a swamp. The city to the south, Edmonton, had not yet built itself out that far, perhaps lacking the resources to push itself further north. In 1941, when the Canadian government built Griesbach, its lands had been a bog. Now, that story captured my wonder.

I could not believe that Griesbach, a place seemingly so settled, so brimming with history, could be sitting atop a swamp. My school seemed so sturdy, but, I wondered, what if all around me started to sink back into the muck beneath? Which end of the school would go first? What if I woke up one morning to see that my school had, preposterously, vanished, the first victim of the swamp's return to claim its rights? "Ha! Such hubris, thinking you, the Department of National Defense, could plant your little community atop *me*," I imagined the marsh gloating. Where would we hold Wolf Club meetings? What if houses were pulled under next? Whoever thought a neighbourhood could be built on top of a swamp?

Griesbach survived the bog beneath, but could not survive the Canada Lands Company, falling victim not to the vengeance of the past, but to the whims of the future. In the end, what killed Griesbach was not the assumed worthlessness of what lay beneath it, but the rising value of its surface in a hot-as-a-pistol Edmonton property market.



## (b)

Griesbach for me remains both a haunting and a haunted place. Do we not also call a place a "haunt"? I seek to recognize Griesbach's ghosts not so much across place, but across time. I seek to meet them by cartography as well as archeology. I seek these haunting spectres, to not give up the ghost. What evades, exceeds, and remains ever beyond the apparent surface of a place, of Griesbach? I believe ghosts haunt the old base, not the imaginary ghosts of the popular imagination, but ghosts relating to Haunting Inquiry.

## (c)

An early theme of my thesis returns: the most disturbing haunting occurs when I stop feeling haunted. I find ghosts haunting Griesbach: unstable disruptions letting me know that I am a visitor. I ponder what draws me to stories of ghosts and hauntings. Psychoanalytic theory provides tools to help me to understand my desire. A Lacanian (Lacan, 2001) view suggests that a split, self-alienated subject futilely and forever pursues various objects of desire to fill a fundamental emptiness incurred upon entering the symbolic order, the world of language and culture. What did I leave behind that I seek forever to find in culture? What do the ghosts of Griesbach announce of what I seek?

I feel that I can't let my past go. As I saw Griesbach's buildings being dug up and hauled away, I felt something of myself being killed. Each time I went to the area, I felt a dreadful kind of sickness. Eventually, when I observed the traces of my former house's removal (on Good Friday, 2004), my panic strangely turned into a kind of ease. Now that the day I had been dreading had arrived, I felt mysteriously less haunted. The ghosts

seemed to rattle their chains loudest while the house was still there to haunt. When it was being removed, I felt a fragile sense of stillness.

Recall the line from Earle Birney's (1964, p.37) poem "Can Lit": *Its only by our lack of ghosts we're haunted*. To me, these words speak richly of the relationship between ghost stories and keeping alive past hopes. When my house was removed, some of its ghosts went as well, so haunting becomes an aporia, a kind of impossible contradiction: I am most haunted when the ghosts depart with my house. At this moment, I must not give up the ghost, not let hopes die.

### 3.

#### (a)

"It's remembrance day. [Pause] Memories are all he has left"

Narrator, *Where is Here?* (Gunnarsson, et al., 1987)

"Meaningful" learning becomes a process of aporetic mourning. The National Film Board of Canada documentary *Where is Here?* (Gunnarsson et al., 1987) depicts an elderly World War II veteran (Lloyd) in early stages of Alzheimer's disease—ironically, the interview takes place on *Remembrance Day*. His memories fade. The man cannot remember his D-Day comrades; moreover, he knows he cannot remember. He is moved to tears as he realizes his War and sense of whom he is are fleeting.



*(Where is Here?, n.d.)*

Haunting Inquiry opens toward memory's haunting Other. Applied to memory, Haunting Inquiry retreats from distinctions between "what happened" and "what is remembered," between signified and signifier, and between text and its referent. An uncanny space of haunting emerges—memory becomes neither wholly past event nor a present neural synaptic charge. In the field of psychoanalysis, one often talks of various forms of forgetting. "Repression," "suppression," and "disavowal" serve as terms used to describe psychic processes of dealing with what consciousness cannot bear to admit. One cannot acknowledge certain things and continue to maintain given identities, identities that depend upon forms of forgetting. Alcorn (2002) provides some valuable insights into the ways that the relationship between what I read as such forms of forgetting, identity, and learning can be approached pedagogically. Here, one must mourn attachments that are pivotal to one's subjectivity and identity. I see these attachments as haunted by forgettings.



In the present chapter, I explore, develop, and mine these insights with a certain inflection of an Otherwise. One reason mourning can be such difficult work is one *desires* to remember. One longs to keep memories. That is why mourning can be so difficult but also so sweet. My purpose is to read Alcorn with a certain haunting of Jacques Derrida looking over my shoulder. This discussion does not provide a cookbook of specific classroom practices but develops Haunting Inquiry as a generative linguistic conceptual framework for understanding media and the curriculum.

One value of Alcorn's proposition and *pedagogy of desire* in general is that they provide a way to understand change. After all, as educators, if we are not interested in effecting some sort of change (change in students, communities, society), then what are we doing?

**(b) Alcorn Advocates Slow Mourning as the Basis of Meaningful Learning**

"Life is just as sweet to them as it is to you and I, I guess."

Perly, *Where is Here?* (Gunnarsson et al.,  
1987)

As I read Alcorn's "Engaging Affect: Dialectic, Drive, and the Mourning of Identity," for dialectic (positive change) to come ~~about~~, the student must let go through gradual mourning of her or his drive-driven demands of object/identity-fixated desire, for they function as resistances to change. Our investments supporting whom we think we are can stop us from growing. Through writing, such as that which Berman (n.d.) undertakes with his students, we can get close to what our consciousness can admit as the

moment/trauma/event, the loss, the break, the tragedy, that we deal with through these investments and desires—through whom we think we are.

In "Toward a Pedagogy of Symptoms, Anxiety, and Mourned Objects," Alcorn (2002) reaffirms that we cannot just deny our attachments. We cannot will them easily and cleanly away. We cannot, like the Chris Cooper-acted character, John Laroche in the Spike Jonze-directed/Charlie Kaufman-written 2002 film *Adaptation*, simply wake up one morning (pun not intended, but not denied either) and walk away from our attachments. We must mourn them, gradually, over time.

The mourning itself seems to be a process of change, and it is not easy. It is not a playful hop over an obstacle to arrive at some pre-determined location. It must involve pain. When whom we think we are gets in the way of whom we think we want to be, we have a choice. We can continue spinning our wheels, driving in the same psychic rut repeatedly, putting miles on the odometer, but not going anywhere new. Here, a haunting form of grounding "ontological" urgency demands to be reckoned with in identity, change, and learning. Identity is not pure fluidity, which, I think, is how Alcorn chooses to characterize Foucauldian discourse. One does not swim undisturbed in whatever waters one finds. One's movement, one's strokes, bump up against resistances that will not go away, that will not allow themselves to be entirely forgotten. Such are inner resistances where the swimmer meets the water. Resistances have the potential to both stop movement as well as to provide something from which to push forward. They are the condition of growth and learning. I read Alcorn's significant assumption as such an ontological assertion of psychic processes. Significant pedagogical change occurs not just at that surface linguistic level but also beneath the waves.

(c) I Read Mourning as Aporetic

"Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio"

Marcellus cries out, regarding King

Hamlet's ghost (as cited in Derrida, 1994,

p.176)

My father has cancer.

Our relationship is curiously both distant and close. In ways, my dad opens a mystery to me – but an uncannily familiar one. I know him as part of myself yet also as a stranger. An old aphorism (which I believe comes from Nietzsche) recounts that what merely is whispered in the father becomes spoken in the son. Similarly, I wonder if what is forgotten in the father can be remembered in the son. I feel strangely that I may have forgotten something, which has not yet forgotten me. This mourning, which is already upon me, reminds me that I am in no hurry to let it go. I want time to stop.

This event is an urgent opening to ask, what is mourning, is it really possible, and (trivially), does it really matter to curriculum? My dad has cancer, and I enter into mourning—even pre-emptive mourning. Can it be a symptom to want never to stop mourning? Would this be genuine mourning, or just the statement or assertion of mourning, a kind of superficiality of which Alcorn (2002) warns? Would stopping mourning be the mourning's mourning? (Yes, but as an aporia) I like especially to recognize that a *morning* always exists beyond *mourning*. A new object will always take the place of another. If we are to continue growing, do we need to keep mourning? Presumably, unless we are in a cycle of repetition—both not mourning and mourning can be repetitive—again, an aporia emerges.



I see much wisdom in Alcorn's proposition. However, is it trite, too-cute, or presumptuous to presume to perform a thought experiment of applying the theory to itself? I think doing so has its value. What is it this theory functions to not admit by the very positing of itself? Perhaps the uncertainty of no fixed ground? The Real of the drives (in the tradition of Lacan: the Real as the trans-symbolic impetus of recognizable desire), in all its irreducible ungraspability, at least functions as something to hook one's anchor upon. The mourning of a symptom is unlikely ever to be neatly complete. In a sense, the mourning and the symptom slide off each other. "Mourning" would seem to presume a unified object to be mourned. Thus, mourning's success could rather easily be judged. Either mourning succeeds or it doesn't. However, when the object of mourning is not a unified, self-integrated, distinguishable, and demarkable entity, judgements regarding the successful mourning of it become blurred. This problem emerges when the object-to-be-mourned is a psychic symptom, or, more properly speaking, the identification of a psychic symptom. The logic of the Real implies that the trans-Symbolic, trans-Imaginary cause of the Symbolically-articulated and Imaginary-supported character of the symptom will always ever escape and evade the symptom. In addition, the psychoanalytic logic of this symptomology acknowledges that identified symptoms can be emptied of psychic significance. The Real anxiety or gap can hauntingly travel, and occupy, haunt, possess some different symptom. The symptom can thus suggest a fluid, free-floating character. The symptom beckons to an endless, *mise en abyme* openness.

Moreover, in keeping with a spirit of Alcorn's work, the goal is not either to judge others as "sick" or to cure them. It is to grow. His theory is one of how change occurs,

attending to its psychic dimensions. It is a theory of learning and of resistances to learning, of calling for understanding, and of how personal growth must occur.

In relation to such growth, I would like to perform a sort of "thought experiment" and think about mourning informed by a certain spirit of Jacques Derrida. In a sense, psychic objects of mourning may be seen as Others "within" the self. They are symbolic objects of investment. They are perhaps not of us. We merely recognize them as such. Alternatively, perhaps more to the point, invoking the Lacanian mirror stage, we misrecognize them as such. I shall use some of my readings of Derrida on mourning as a template, a heuristic, a pair of glasses to think about mourning psychic objects.

In *Politics of Friendship*, Derrida (1997) adds an inflection of guilt to mourning. Derrida writes, "Philia begins with the possibility of survival. Surviving—that is the other name of mourning whose possibility is never to be awaited" (as cited in Brault and Naas, 2001, p. 1). Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (2001) develop this idea further:

One must always go before the other. In the politics of friendship, Jacques Derrida demonstrates that this is the law of friendship—and thus of mourning. One friend must always go before the other; one friend must always die first. There is no friendship without the possibility that one friend will die before the other, perhaps right before the other's eyes. For even when friends die together, or rather, at the same time, their friendship will have been structured from the very beginning by the possibility that one of them would see the other die, and so, surviving, would be left to bury, to commemorate, and to mourn (p. 1).

We dare not *begin* to mourn. Doing so would acknowledge the death of the Other.

Moreover, beginning to mourn also implicates oneself in the insinuated guilt of survival.

Similarly, we dare not *cease* to mourn. Penelope Deutscher (2005) writes:

For mourning to fully succeed, we should be able to get over the loss of the other in question. But if we can get over him or her, something seems to have failed in the mourning. Think of how an easy recovery from a death feels like a betrayal of the person lost. From this perspective, a truly appropriate morning would be a mourning we couldn't accomplish, that continues until our death. Derrida claims that if mourning succeeds, it fails, and it must fail in order to succeed. In this sense, mourning is impossible. Derrida's aim is not to berate those who have managed to recover from the loss of their loved ones. He has written many essays in which he mourns friends, family and colleagues. (pp. 71-2)

Mourning, it seems, must ever occur yet fail. Mourning, then, seems intimately related to haunting. It infuses a process that must remain in play. It must remain open. As it remains open, it never succeeds. If it presumes to close, to complete, to finish, it fails a certain spirit of mourning. Mourning and its aporetic quality haunt the very structure of the memory of the departed Other. Moreover, as the relationship similarly structures and haunts from the beginning with the spectre of one or the Other's passing, the very relationship is similarly haunted by mourning's play-as-aporia.

Derrida's mourning is an impossibility, but that impossibility marks us as being in a kind of relationality. Again, Deutscher (2005) writes that Derrida believes we are

[u]nable to encounter the other *as* radically foreign. The other is always to some extent understood by my horizon of expectation. No matter how much we might take ourselves to be receptive to the other, our experience of another is always somehow restricted to our perceptions, our preconditions, our history. In this



sense... the other may be described as 'impossible' for me (p. 73). ... His manner of treating impossibility offers a solution to the problem. According to Derrida, impossibility is an experience or an event. It is a relationship we have, which means that we could never be self-enclosed entities. Impossibility is not a possibility that I cannot access. Rather, I am differentiated by impossibility, and this is one of the many ways in which I am a being in relationship with otherness. ... It is not that impossibility performs no 'work': it mediates me, and contributes to the complexity of my identity. (p. 74)

The impossibility of directly accessing the Other is a characteristic-that-is-not-a-characteristic that we all share. It is not a positive, ontological attribute that one possesses. It is not "money in the bank." Nor is it precisely a lack, a direct absence. Such a feature would imply a hole in an otherwise integrated field of existence. It marks a relationality. However, it is not an intersubjective webbing, connecting all in a field of mutual integration. Such explanations all share a conceit of being an easy answer. The operational structure of the impossibility is that of an undecidable. To characterize it merely as a "characteristic," an "absence," or a "received relationality" would presume to close its inherent openness. It would be to clarify it in a unified conceptual category. It would be to presume to take the undecidable and decide it. The impossibility must remain open. It must remain in play. Moreover, it must remain in play in such a way that even the naming of it as such must not presume to close it. Impossibility must be more than simply "impossible." "Impossibility" merely names impossibility. Impossibility that "transcends" "impossibility," impossibility that is both less and more than its name,

impossibility unworthy of its name, must perform impossibility. "Genuine" impossibility must perform it.

This thinking shares affinities with Derrida's (1995a) chapter from *The Gift of Death*: "Tout Autre Est Tout Autre"—every other is wholly other. All at least share the quality of wholly otherness. Part of the wholly otherness, as developed in the work of mourning, includes the others, especially the departed others, that we carry around "within" us. When a friend departs, she lives on in those who remember and mourn. This dwelling is not reductive. Granted, the friend dwells and continues to speak through us. In that sense, the friend's otherness fails at the site of our efforts to preserve the friend as such. However, the failure asserts the friend's otherness. Articulation of one's otherness ever both fails and succeeds in the instance another tries to speak it. In Derrida's writings about mourning, collected in *The Work of Mourning* (Brault and Naas, 2001, p. 1), he often incorporates the words of the departed other in his own text of mourning—an effort to let the dead continue to speak in their own words. However, I read this effort as an aporetic failure. The incorporated text troubles because of the space between everyday citation and a door left open for the other.

Thus, I read the departed other as neither wholly dead nor alive. I see the other as haunting, as a haunting Other. I appreciate something Derrida (1994) writes in *Specters of Marx*:

If it—learning to live—remains to be done, it can happen only between life and death. Neither in life nor in death *alone*. What happens between two, and between all the 'two's' one likes, such as between life and death, can only *maintain itself* with some ghost, can only *talk with or about* some ghost. ... So it

would be necessary to learn spirits. Even and especially if this, the spectral, *is not*. Even and especially if this, which is neither substance, nor essence, nor existence, *is never present as such*. The time of the 'learning to live', a time without tutelary present, would amount to this, to which the exordium is leading us: to learn to live *with* ghosts, in the upkeep, the conversation, the company, or the companionship, in the commerce without commerce of ghosts. To live otherwise, and better. No, not better, but more justly. But *with them*. No *being-with* the other, no *socius* without this *with* that makes *being-with* in general more enigmatic than ever for us. And this being-with specters would also be, not only but also, a *politics* of memory, of inheritance, and of generations. (xviii-xix)

If mourning is a necessary impossibility, perhaps one response learns to live with ghosts, or, I will say here, "spectres." I will say "spectre" with all its semantic haunting as a bridge between deconstruction and psychoanalysis when looking at the hauntings of the self. Jodey Castricano (2001) in *Cryptomimesis: the Gothic and Jacques Derrida's Ghost Writing* argues that the 'I' is haunted by an other, which secretly comes from the conditions of the attachments prefiguring its own symbolic "existence."

Identity is haunted with Others, and attachment to these Others is a valuable way to look at Alcorn's call for students to mourn attachments informing their identity through writing when those attachments interfere with dialectical change. A line from the Bruce Cockburn (1984) song "Lovers in a Dangerous Time" states that "Nothing good comes without some kind of fight." For really profound learning to occur, a learner must make tough choices and tough changes and mourn what those changes leave behind. However, learning that does not require such grappling-leading-to-mourning has a place.



I need to learn how to use my new washing machine, fill out my income tax form, and program the clock on my DVD player. However, none of those learnings challenges who I am and how I see myself in the world or calls me to leave those things behind. Some learning must do so—unless I believe that I know everything important I need to know, and I do not need to grow or change further. This statement applies to students in K-12, college/university, and graduate school. This model does not provide a formula to determine what such knowledge ought to be or when it is best to approach it, but merely assumes that for such identity-changing learning to take place, mourning must occur. The foregoing discussion, I hope, illustrates how difficult, really impossible, mourning is. However, I do not mean “impossible” in the sense of “we had might as well give up and go home.” I mean “impossible” in the sense that we bear the ghosts of our mourning with us forever, just as our mournings bear us with them.

I recall Lloyd's heartbreaking frustration in *Where is Here?*, for he was consciously aware that his memories and whom he understood himself to be were slipping away. Lloyd's mourning for himself came upon him. He would no longer be whom he had been, and who he was to become was uncertain. Similarly, when we mourn a part of ourselves, or rather, seeing our attachments as thoroughly integrated into our identities, we mourn not just a part of ourselves, but our whole self. As pundits say with respect to the appointments of a new Supreme Court nominee, “You change one justice, and you change the whole court.” Change calls for impossible mourning, and such mourning calls for patience.

## 4.

Haunting charts a cryptic place between mourning and melancholia. The notion of the “crypt” is central to this proposition—specifically, what lurks in the crypt, and what returns from it. Davis (2005) usefully distinguishes between two strands of thought haunting the emergent structure of hauntology. In *The Shell and the Kernel*, Abraham and Torok (1994) introduce the idea of the “phantom.” The phantom carries secrets from past generations and haunts subsequent generations. The phantom conceals a secret by misleading those endeavoring to discover it: “the phantom is a liar; its effects are designed to mislead the haunted subject and to ensure that its secret remains shrouded in mystery” (Davis, 2005, p. 374). The hauntologist pursuing Abraham and Torok’s phantom (or more specifically, traversing the phantom to discover its secret) seeks to add the secret to knowledge.

Derrida’s spectre, on the other hand, destabilizes the presumption of knowledge— “[F]or Derrida, on the contrary, the spectre’s secret is a productive opening of meaning rather than a determinate content to be uncovered” (p. 376). Here, the phantom is seen as somewhat akin to the haunting figure of the classic ghost story. This figure beckons to reveal a specific secret—to reveal the buried bones. [Recall Chapter Eight’s introduction of indeterminate secrecy.] Derrida’s spectre is more of a deconstructive figure revealing the play of presumably unitary certainties. I see virtue and danger in both perspectives. The phantom appeals as a theoretical tool for accessing concealed or disavowed secrets—genocide, exclusion, lies. The danger is that unearthed secrets, revealed truths, like all “truths,” have the danger of anchoring subsequent orthodoxies. That danger is not the

responsibility of those who have suffered in the past. Nonetheless, the theoretical figure of the spectre has the potential to disrupt such tendencies.

I think of the phantom as a figure preventing proper mourning. The phantom prevents the past from releasing its hold upon the present and future. As a mechanism of the unconscious, the phantom continues to trouble the subject with a past it may have forgotten but which has not yet forgotten it. The departed are not permitted to be successfully mourned. The phantom's lies and disturbances become a form of melancholy. To overcome the melancholy, the haunted subject must discover the truth of the secret before it can be successfully mourned.

The spectre operates differently. It does not conceal a predetermined truth interfering with the subject's peace of mind. Rather, I read the logic of the spectre as preventing the discovery of "predetermined truth" but for a different reason. The restful sleep of one who contentedly "knows the truth" can also be the very site for the production of ideology. [Recall Nietzsche's (1878/1996) dictum that "Convictions are more dangerous enemies of truth than lies" (p. 234).] As I have stated (with admitted frequency) elsewhere in this thesis, I admire the line by Earle Birney, "Its only by our lack of ghosts we're haunted" (1964, p. 37). I was most haunted when the workers loaded up my house in Griesbach and hauled it away. The haunting character of a place does not dissipate when the place is destroyed.

A difference exists between the slow mourning to introjection and the interrupted mourning of incorporation (Castricano, 2001). "Introjection" is the internalization of the departed Other or object. Introjection recognizes the other as dead and inters the Other within the psyche of the mourner. It is a slow, gradual process, the process of successful



mourning. Freud and Alcorn advocate slow mourning to introjection. For these thinkers, the failure to mourn results in melancholia.

Abraham and Torok, Derrida, and Castricano write of the refusal of mourning, such that the refusal leads to incorporation. Abraham and Torok regard this condition as pathological. In this case, the departed person or object fantasmically incorporates into the ego where it continues to haunt as a secret. Introjection creates a place, a crypt, for the Other within the psyche (though in a different way than introjection does—more on this below). Castricano and Derrida do not see such a psyche as “pathological.” They see it as the condition of subjectivity.

Derrida (1997) argues for grieving for the Other before she or he dies. As he argues in *Politics of Friendship*, relationships are structured from the beginning by the inevitability that one or the other will die first. I mourn the Other before the Other dies. After the Other dies, I incorporate the Other. Castricano (2001) writes of incorporation:

If the dead other is not to be interiorized, it is, nonetheless, taken inside the subject and lodged within the ego, but as a secret, sealing the loss of the object and marking the refusal to mourn. Incorporations mark the limits of introjection since it consists of the desire (whose?) to keep the dead *alive*, safe, inside me. (p. 36)

Incorporation does not digest the lost object; it maintains it. Castricano identifies this process as “cryptomimesis.” Derrida considers the crypt a spacing within the self. This spacing constitutes an internal structure of desire. A reading of Lacan considers a gap in the symbolic order of the self to be the precondition of the subject. Castricano reads Derrida’s view of the crypt analogously. This space within the self, this dwelling place

for spectres of the Other is the hearth of desire—a secret desire to keep the Other within the self, living. This Other within the self inaugurates a structure by which to distinguish the subject. Abraham and Torok regard incorporation as a pathology, as an occasion for phantom-trickery. The implication *Haunting Inquiry* draws from Derrida's thinking on the matter sees incorporation as an opportunity to shake hands with the Other.

The haunting form of the Other within the self opens to a different sense of the self from traditionally constituted understandings. If one can tolerate the ambiguity of a haunted subject as a dwelling place for one's departed Others, then this account can provide understanding for a self occupied by Others, an architecture of memory and memory's Other. Persistent efforts to deny such haunting Others function as a disavowal and allow "phantoms" to run unchecked.

*City of Gold* disavows Dawson City's hauntings, leaving the hauntings free to claim it. "*No ghosts of the past return to haunt us, here in these silent rooms*" (Low and Koenig, 1957). However, ghosts return in the narrator's memory. Berton laments of the town, "[I] don't imagine that I shall ever see it again" (1957). Berton seems to be grieving the town in advance of a departure—either the town or he will outlive the other. The one that departs first will haunt the other. According to the ideas presented in this chapter, after that haunting begins, after the crypt-space of the Other is inaugurated, there will be no final mourning. There will be the spectre of the Other haunting the aporia of mourning. The spectre will haunt as memory's Other. *Haunting Inquiry* opens to such aporetic mourning of memory's Other as a precondition for certain instances of profound learning.

### Ellipsis: Discussion and Conclusion (without Conclusion)

The fifth element of *Haunting Inquiry*, its final element, presents an irony. The final element is its unfinal nature. I take some inspiration for this feature from much of Derrida's work. I notably recall the "ending" of *Politics of Friendship*: "O my democratic friends..." (1997, p. 306). I read Derrida's ellipsis as a beckoning forward to an ever-presentable present, an impossible present ever haunted by the spectre of a future (as I discuss in Chapter Six). The grammatical use of ellipsis typically occurs in the body of a text (rather than the "end") and signals a citational omission for clarifying the use of the citation. In a sense, I read Derrida's summative ellipsis as signaling an omission but not simply an omission of excision. Traditional elliptical omission omits from the text's past—before the text's recharacterization as citation. Derrida both omits and convokes the text's future. This omission omits because such inclusion *per se* would be impossible. It omits the future but does not dispense with it. Derrida's omission, after all, beckons toward the future, that which he cannot include as such but which nonetheless whispers in the ear of the present. It marks the text with a reminder that the to-come is impossibly both to-come and already-here.

I mobilize a similar logic in the present "conclusion." First, I reflect that *Haunting Inquiry* is as a language. Its "bricks and mortar" are the introduction, development, and use of a specific vocabulary. I further reflect upon *Haunting Inquiry*'s implications for the curricular future, specifically the way that hope and possibility ever haunt the curricular present. I discuss some of *Haunting Inquiry*'s limitations as a conceptual framework in the field of Education. I further elucidate *Haunting Inquiry* with an examination of both its status as a linguistic conceptual framework and, as such, some of its relevant terms. I



also refine the framework in relation to the whispering inheritance of its generative influences in an effort to clarify Haunting Inquiry's own distinctiveness. Education, largely, is a field forged in classroom and curricular practice. Implications for research haunt deeply with an imperative for applicability. Therefore, this chapter touches upon implications for applying Haunting Inquiry. Haunting Inquiry offers applicability, admittedly with its own haunting logic, for classroom teachers, curriculum scholars, and the public at large. The present discussion/conclusion concludes (without conclusion) "in opening." The chapter "ends" in convocation, in conjuration with the haunting Otherwise. The chapter (and the thesis) "ends" with ellipsis.

### **Reflection: Haunting Inquiry is as a Language**

I characterize Haunting Inquiry as a language tool or heuristic. It stands as a means to use language to tap language's own potentialities. Obviously, this thesis is in English. However, Haunting Inquiry is certainly not limited to that or any language. One emergent implication of Haunting Inquiry is its status as a word tool used to write about texts not specifically linguistic—films. Granted, the documentaries possess a linguistic component, but they comprise so much more: image, sound, and the ways these elements come together. An important assumption of Haunting Inquiry is that the elements do not combine in an airtight, interlocking fashion. Spaces remain—gaps, openings to liminality and interstitiality. Spacings emerge not only within the text but within efforts to write about it. As I interrogate the texts, I generate new texts (such as the present thesis) as well as spaces between them. Such spacing speaks to the crypt discussed by Abraham and Torok (1994). Haunting Inquiry opens to the spacings it creates, which are inherently

spaces of haunting. They are spaces always operating, both absent and present in inquiry to and with these films. Thus, Haunting Inquiry becomes a language tool to open toward what language might not apprehend unless compelled—the very conditions of its own operation.

In this way, Haunting Inquiry both does and does not transcend language. It is of language. Its five assumptions/elements (detailed in this thesis' Introduction) are articulated in language. Moreover, I do not read Haunting Inquiry as a naïve conceptuality—I do not presume that some fact of Haunting Inquiry floats freely in meta-linguistic space awaiting capture by the details of my linguistic theorization. Language, in a sense, exceeds Haunting Inquiry even as Haunting Inquiry exceeds language. That language fails in comprehensive signification is not a new insight. Something ever exceeds language and its signification function. This Otherwise of language is certainly part of Haunting Inquiry's "domain." Language can never say enough about Haunting Inquiry. However, I reflect that language also says too much about it. Language always closes possibilities even as it opens them (and *vice versa*). Even as writing about the films opens to new possibilities of the texts, the writing moves off in its own directions as it inaugurates a new text in its own right. When I engage in Haunting Inquiry, when I create these new texts, something of the film remains left behind. What is left behind is part of the object and condition of Haunting Inquiry. The haunting Otherwise lies both on the road ahead and in the rear view mirror.

Haunting Inquiry opens toward a certain haunting Otherwise of the way language works. The purpose of my thesis is to provide some insight into learning. After all, I examine these films because of their troubling merit as resources to support curriculum.

A troubling relationship exists among the films, language, and learning. Part of the relationship has to do with how one defines "learning," which, obviously, is a primary goal of education. "Learning" is defined in and by language. How do I achieve such defined learning and how do I know when I have? These questions are, in turn, answered linguistically. Language functions, then, as the condition of a set of arguments. The definitions employed within the set function as the elements of a formula. For example, Learning (L) is achieved through the application of Pedagogy (P) to Curriculum (C) directed toward Students (S) and measured by Assessment (A) and Evaluation (E). However, the process rarely works out so cleanly. The linguistic formula has its Otherwises. Certainly, language clarifies thinking about these matters. However, so much more (contingencies, misunderstandings, injustices) than such clarity haunts learning, and Haunting Inquiry is one way to open toward those Otherwises.

**Further Reflection: Hope, the Future, and Possibility ever Haunt the Curricular Present**

Curriculum itself is a text, an endeavor, a framework for practice inherently haunted by some spectre of the future. This haunting often serves as a source of anxiety but also of hope. Different communities in Canada understand very well the importance of curriculum for their future. Placing one's stamp upon curriculum gives one some say in the future. Many communities feel that if they are to survive, then they must be represented in the school's curricula. Curriculum opens to the future for these communities and haunts with the future.



Certain formulations of educational administration and governance also recognize this point. Accountability policies and practices haunt with visions of the future. A recurring concern voiced by educators over standardized, high-stakes assessment such as Provincial Achievement Tests is the implied influence the tests assert upon everyday classroom practices. This spectre of the test looming on the horizon hauntingly visits and impacts daily teaching. The spectre encourages or seems to reward teaching-to-the-test. The test emerges as a future haunting the curricular present and also haunting with a certain anxiety.

Students' individual futures also haunt the curricular present. They haunt with questions ever pointed toward the future. However, these questions are asked, if not, demanded, of the present. How will the curriculum influence the kind of person this student will become? Asked in the present, however, the question is impossible to answer, for it is asking the curricular present about its future. *Neither the present nor the future is telling.* The future does not and cannot reveal its secrets. The future as an impossible spectral figure circles the present—although the future is, in a sense, ahead, to-come, it troubles from behind. After all, though the future lies ahead, I cannot see it. I imagine it looking over my shoulder with its eyes cast upon what I do today. The future becomes a back-seat driver.

Similarly, many people in broader society recognize the opening that curriculum offers. Questions such as "What will be the curriculum?" and "What will be the character of the curriculum?" haunt with the question "What kind of society do we wish to have?" These questions open to debates charged with ideology, vested interests, and, at times, the hope that the future will provide a better society than that of either the past or the

present. Curriculum mobilizes statements of value as statements of fact: "We need to remain competitive," "We must stay 'ahead of the curve,'" "We have to remain leaders." Sometimes, curriculum becomes a screen for projecting fantasies of what kind of a society one believes one lives in or would like to live in. Statements follow such as "The curriculum must promote tolerance" or "It must develop national identity." In addition, curriculum's opening to the future becomes a site for responding to a crisis, such as imminent environmental change, damage, or catastrophe. Another spectre emerging from curriculum's futurely haunting is the "lifelong learner"—a quintessential subject of the future collapsed into a present subject position. The spectre of the lifelong learner mobilizes the curriculum's imperative to facilitate learning but disallows it from ever finishing as long as the learner is alive. The spectre colonizes the subject with its own version of what it means to be a learner, which, incidentally, supports a typically market-friendly view of society. The imperative to continue learning in the future collapses into the curriculum of the present and the person the curriculum is expected to produce (or reproduce).

I have cast the forgoing observations in the language of haunting and how futures, or fantasies of futures, haunt the present. Different inflections within the language of haunting generate different senses and implications. To revisit, in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 2005), a "ghost" is an immaterial and non-corporeal figure. An "apparition" is a vision or appearance, while a "phantom" is an appearance rather than reality. A "spirit" becomes an "animating or vital principal" (2005), while a "spectre" combines characteristics of ghost, apparition, phantom, and spirit. In Chapter Eight, I argued that the figure of Paul Tomkowicz suggested aspects of

them all. I now argue similarly regarding the future as it haunts the present of curriculum. This future *per se* is immaterial. Nonetheless, one can “see it” (one can at least “see” that it beckons) even though it is invisible. However, just when I feel comfortable that I have captured the future in my vision, a provocation (that is known already) reminds me that nothing is there—*the future has not happened yet*. Surely, the future haunts as a spirit in the present, an animating or organizing principal, but the future *per se* is presently impossible. The future never arrives—only more presents. The future cannot accurately be named as it slips ever into the past. The future haunting the “present” of the curriculum becomes spectral—it combines senses of all haunting’s language—but uncannily and completely none of them conclusively. Haunting Inquiry provides a language to access a spectre of the spectral future.

### **Haunting Inquiry has Limits**

Haunting Inquiry is a generative framework promising rich potentiality. Nonetheless, it remains a conceptual framework only. Its primary value in this thesis is in opening the potential of NFB documentaries as curricular resources. As a first implicit advantage, Haunting Inquiry brings to the fore these near-forgotten classics. However, the framework reveals that these films are more than antique curiosities. Haunting Inquiry recognizes haunting implications brought forth by the films and allows using those problems to generate further learning. The framework opens the films to broader knowledge discourses. The documentaries in question, after all, do not exist in isolation. They are artifacts informing what comes to count as knowledge about Canada and the world. Using the films to support curriculum mobilizes knowledge frameworks and



implicates them in the public realm. Haunting Inquiry can open understanding of the curriculum in new ways. It can mobilize the curriculum to open toward what, in turn, understands the curriculum itself. Haunting Inquiry of the films provides starting points toward appreciating curriculum meta-dynamics: *I know what the curriculum calls me to know, but why does it do so?*

Haunting Inquiry is not a ready-packaged tool, ready for classroom use. I certainly understand the attractiveness of such a tool. In today's culture of "accountability," teachers are required to do more with less time and resources than ever before. Teachers are considered accountable for student achievement—notably students' achievement as presumably measured by standardized tests. However, the haunting shadow of "accountability" is not on the reward side of possibility but on the punitive. The looming spectre is not one of reward for student achievement but implied punishment for students' failure to achieve. Moreover, I further question the discourse of accountability for its tacitly haunting implication that, in the past, teachers were somehow not accountable. Teachers have always been "authentically" accountable for student success and failure. They have always been ethically responsible, first, directly to their students, to say nothing of responsibility to the student's families and to the teachers' own communities of peers. Teachers live in the broadly constituted communities they teach, resulting in genuine accountability. The rationalized character of bureaucratized accountability schemes such as "No Child Left Behind" seems to shift the focus away from such communities (while professing to act on their behalf).

Good teaching has many aspects. A caring disposition and genuine respect for students are two. An appreciation of each student's unique situation and challenges

certainly helps classroom practice. However, an important place remains for content competence. Whether a teacher is an Elementary generalist, a Special Educator, or matriculation stream Mathematics specialist, competence with the curriculum remains a continuing theme. I do not reduce teaching to this facet, but I honour its importance. A deep understanding of the curriculum serves teachers well. *Haunting Inquiry* provides a framework to attain such an understanding. It creates opportunities both to see the curriculum from an infinite number of angles and in terms of implications not previously imagined, but, nonetheless, haunting the curriculum. *Haunting Inquiry* does not provide a ready formula for attaining such competence. I believe that ideas are like roommates—you must live with them for a while before you really get to know them. This important path to curriculum competence will not be *completed* in a University course, a professional development workshop, or a graduate seminar. Eventually, as a teacher, I must take responsibility for my own curricular competence. *Haunting Inquiry* provides an opportunity to move toward this.

*Haunting Inquiry* might be difficult to understand for some readers. The framework certainly plays upon counter-intuitivism. *Haunting Inquiry*'s eschewal of non-contradictory logic and received notions of ontology do not help its case in this regard. The framework mobilizes ideas perhaps unfamiliar to educators with a different sort of background than a specific kind of humanities/arts/social science training. Nonetheless, *Haunting Inquiry* does not "come totally from left field." The ideas informing *Haunting Inquiry* are quite consistent with much contemporary scholarship in a range of Arts and Science disciplines. Granted, this type of scholarship willfully employs unique language—neologisms comprise an important aspect of it. Thinking in new ways often

requires new language to do so. This language is beyond easily immediate comprehension by many readers. My sensitivity to this problem informs my offering of the concise "5 assumptions of Haunting Inquiry" listed above.

As is no secret in the field of Education, a certain tension persists between those identifying their work as "in the field" and those as "in theory." This disjuncture remains despite long-standing assertions that the binary itself is fallacious, and that each aspect strengthens and reinforces the other. These tensions imply stereotypes. One stereotype contends that people working in theory obfuscate with language to conceal that they lack relevant contributions to offer Education. The other stereotype holds that practitioners working in the field resist theory because their circumstances of day-to-day classroom pressures demand they focus exclusively upon the job at hand. A different way to read the tensions is as a struggle for control over the discourse of Education—who controls the profession: classroom teachers, administrators, or academics? However, I read the tensions as haunted by another, more complex reading. Here, field and theory practitioners possess a basic respect for the work of the other. However, identity investments in one's work remain cherished aspects of who we understand ourselves to be. To meet the Other (either "the field" or "theory") can create challenges to one's sense of self. As I argue in Chapter 11, profound learning can require us to mourn parts of ourselves, and this work is aporetically difficult. Herein haunts a certain sense of the tension between what is called "the field" and "practice." Mindful of this haunting, I acknowledge the difficulty of approaching Haunting Inquiry.



### Haunting Inquiry: A Rearticulation and Relevant Terms

Haunting Inquiry is a language-oriented tool. In this thesis, the framework uses terms in certain ways to open the films in question to interpretations of the Otherwise. A certain spirit of this opening seeks an uncannily haunting co-habitation between a radically open field of hermeneutic possibility and the urgency of certain "determining" possibilities mobilized by and through the films. The language of haunting grants license balanced with expectation. The license concedes permission to think beyond the presumed literality of the text, and the expectation (of haunting) is to traverse the absence/presence dichotomy. The anticipated use of these terms does not close around the definitions I provide but initiates a starting point (even if starting *in medias res*, as these words, after all, have histories), a provocation, an opening, a bearing for orientation.

#### Some Haunting Inquiry terms:

*Haunting Inquiry*—The name given to a linguistic conceptual framework developed in this thesis to inform the curricular use of classic NFB documentaries. The framework mobilizes five assumptions:

1. Classic NFB documentaries possess some positive curricular aspects.
2. Troubling aspects haunt the films.
3. The haunting aspects can be mobilized to serve the curriculum and meet the Other.
4. A further aspect of Haunting Inquiry is for learners to reflect upon why they feel haunted (or, indeed, why they do not).

5. An important final aspect of Haunting Inquiry is its un-final nature.

The term opens Haunting Inquiry to several inflections:

- a) It is an inquiry into haunting.
- b) The inquiry haunts the one who undertakes it.
- c) The inquiry itself is haunted.
- d) Through the generation of texts (such as the present thesis), the inquiry inaugurates recognition of hauntings.

"Haunting Inquiry" also names such an inquiry carried out in its name.

*Other*—Haunting alternative opened by a text. A hovering (non)absence/(non)presence whispering in the ear of interpretation—an indeterminable necessity to meaning.

*Ontology*—Category of existence in the classical sense. The study of such presumed existence. An assumption that determinations of such existence remain, in some sense, "possible" and/or circumscribable.

*Hauntology*—Term introduced by Derrida (1994), functioning to spectralize the legacy and possibility of received Marxisms in an era of liberal triumphalism. Features such as commodity characteristics and dialectical telos become modified in their presumed determinism. The term recognizes the contingency, openness, and multiplicity of Marx(es).

*Haunt*—A place and act of somewhat illicit return. As a location or visitation, it remains tainted, fearful, troubling—unwelcome, uncanny.

*Ghost*—An immaterial or non-corporeal figure of haunting, which, is, nonetheless, perceptible or recognizable. On its own terms, it evades ascription of discreet, unified, "hard" ontology—it is neither entirely absent nor present.

*Apparition*—A haunting vision or appearance. Not simply either illusion or visual aspect of a presence—the apparition hauntingly disrupts the presence/absence binary.

*Phantom*—Traditionally, strongly relating to appearance rather than reality. Hauntingly mobilizes a sense of the classic, Platonian appearance/reality distinction. However, like the phantom pain of a removed limb, the phenomenon is real to the one experiencing it. As the example suggests, the phantom strongly relates to a memory that resists being forgotten—a history that will not be excised.

*Spirit*—an animating or vital principal (Oxford University Press, 2005)—like a soul. The “essence” of that which haunts. Infinitely multiple spirits haunt a text and (some of which) can be brought to the “surface” through a Haunting Inquiry.

*Spectre*—Figure/category combining characteristics of ghost, apparition, phantom, and spirit.

*Revenant*—A figure of troubling, haunting return. Often unwelcome and even fearsome. A disquieting reminder of what one may have forgotten but that has not yet forgotten the subject.

*Crypt*—Imaginary spacing inaugurated by text, language, the subject, and understandings of these figures. Deconstructs the binary of inside/outside. The crypt is created by history, lost pasts, and haunting futures. It serves as a site for dwelling between impossible mourning and classical melancholia. It is a place where the Haunting Inquirer can learn to live with ghosts.

*Inheritance*—That which keeps received privileges and challenges open to a forgotten, if troubling Otherwise. Though I may forget my inheritances, they remember me. A trace of the past calling from the future.



### **Some Summative Thoughts on Haunting Inquiry as a Unique Linguistic Conceptual Framework**

What makes Haunting Inquiry not simply deconstruction, or a vague combination of deconstruction and psychoanalysis? What makes Haunting Inquiry a unique theoretical framework? First, deconstruction is not a conceptual framework as such. It is the name given to a process always already at work in and through texts. Deconstruction is not determinable or circumscribable—the process of naming deconstruction does not escape that which it would presume to name. Haunting Inquiry benefits from a similar contingency. However, I name Haunting Inquiry in the discourses of Education and Curriculum. I name it as something, though not determinable and circumscribable, as something that functions as though it were determinable and circumscribable. I identify it as sort of tool, benefiting from a portability—as though it can be taken up and applied in a variety of educational/curricular circumstances. The circumstances in/for which I have specifically developed the framework concern the classic NFB documentaries. These films, which due to their historicity, curricular quality, and troubling character present problems calling for a haunting approach. In addition, Haunting Inquiry is specifically designed as a framework to enhance curricular understanding. Many protégées of deconstruction *per se* would be unlikely to frame deconstruction—or generative implications of its ideas—as anything quite so methodological. Herein lies another unique feature of Haunting Inquiry, and I name the framework with a certain (hauntingly respectful) impudence. However, if my use of these ideas to name a linguistic conceptual framework raises some eyebrows, I do so with the haunting hope of making these ideas accessible to the field(s) of education/curriculum.

Haunting Inquiry haunts the spacing that emerges through the impossibility of its ability to answer conclusively either the call for completely determinable utility or satisfaction with esoteric purity. Haunting Inquiry ultimately fails as both a method for the classroom (by being "too difficult") and as a secret for the ivory tower (by being "bad deconstruction"). The dual failure, ironically, marks its uniquely supple strength. My purpose in writing this text (under the objective of "developing a linguistic conceptual framework") is to attune the reader to the richness and accessibility of haunting possibilities. The films are simultaneously conservative and progressive, and I assert that neither of these characteristics is necessarily good or bad. Haunting Inquiry provides a language to engage the films in a curricular dialogue of hopefulness. I do not provide specification of what to "measure" in the undertaking of a Haunting Inquiry. There exists no determinable fixed point, no standard by which to measure such findings. How do I as a Haunting Inquirer know when my study has been successful? In a certain spirit of haunting, I do not provide an airtight definition of such success. I simply know it when I see it. No set of rules exists for how to measure such success, save the offering of the text I create for reading by others. Colleagues, I hope, will read the work. I hope a spirit of what I have written here inspires, infects, or haunts the reader. Moreover, a troubling test of a theory is the application of that theory to itself. What troubling openings to the Otherwise haunt my text (in addition to those I have attempted to discuss)? That is a question I do not presume to answer. Rather, I offer the text for reading ...

Certain aspects of texts and readers' own openness provide preconditions for haunting. An important precondition is the possibility of interruption. I explain: certain mechanisms can induce the haunting. As in ghostly tales, an unwelcome visiting to a

place (like a haunted house) by the soon-to-be-haunted can initiate a haunting. While the figures of haunting (like ghosts) wait, dissatisfied with their interrupted justice in the non-place between two deaths, a human visitation can stir them. I identify this dynamic with caution, for a certain hierarchical binary haunts it. The process haunts with the potential privileging of the this-worldly (namely, the visitor, or the subject occupying the position of learner or Haunting Inquirer). The visitor and attendant act of visiting are often assumed imbued with a certain "legitimacy." Haunting, on the other hand, or the act undertaken by the ghost or other figure, is considered to be illicit, fearful, illegitimate. Haunting Inquiry rejects such hierarchal binarism for two reasons. First, Haunting Inquiry seeks to reclaim both the erstwhile marginalized figure of haunting as well as to initiate a way of approaching the text that moves beyond this structuring, which is a hierarchical binarism associated with classically received Western metaphysics and ontology. Second, haunting itself haunts with a certain mutuality. Who is to say who definitively haunts whom? Recall the discussion of *The Others* (Amenabar, 2001) in Chapter Eight in which both mortals and ghosts are haunted by each other. Haunting Inquiry takes this idea further and rejects the organizing legitimacy of the mortal over the ghost. The learner or researcher does not take a place of privilege over the figures emergent from the Haunting Inquiry.

Furthermore, toward Haunting Inquiry's distinctiveness, the framework productively uses haunting possibilities in the language of *media*. First, as is obvious (or at least may have been at the beginning of the thesis), this project is about media—or specifically, media education/media literacy. Here, "media" refers to both the texts of what we call "media": documentary films, movies, television and radio programs,



magazines, and advertisements, in addition to the expanding universe of new media, including the World Wide Web and its content. "Media" also refers to the media of transmission. In practice, though, "media" as the object of media studies or media education refers to a haunting intermingling of all these entities. Like Derrida's (1994) hauntological consideration of the commodity in which the presumed discreteness of use value and exchange value mutually haunt each other, media as text and media as vehicle of transmission blur together. A similar logic emerges in consideration of media as the medium of art. Works of art become a haunting mystery—an impossible sliding of ontology. Where do the media (for example, the paint, canvas, and other materials) end and the work of art begin? Derrida (1987) deconstructs Kantian aesthetics to open toward the infinite sliding of the work of art as a presumably and completely discreet, ontologically contained entity. I apply this thinking to the documentary films under study and characterize it as a case of the films' ever haunting Otherwise. Third, "medium" also suggests a sense of being a spiritual medium—an interlocutor between the living and the dead. The spiritual medium becomes the organ or vehicle for voices of the dead. *Haunting Inquiry* approaches the films to access such mediums. As with the haunting logic of the two previous mediums, ontological slippage opens to haunting. As, after Lacan, the ghost appears as that figure between two deaths, the medium (which is also a medium in the two previous senses) haunts the space between the living and the dead. This medium is revealed as being truly neither. *Haunting Inquiry* brings the media's haunting character/non-character into ever escaping view.



### Applying Haunting Inquiry

The title of this section employs somewhat of a misnomer. I contend that I do not so much apply Haunting Inquiry as it applies me. This playful provocation opens to the haunting character of the *subject* of Haunting Inquiry. I do not presume a unified subject somehow behind or employing Haunting Inquiry. As the doer, I do not stand apart as though I and Haunting Inquiry exist in monadic discreteness. I do not naively "pick up" Haunting Inquiry as an inert tool from a toolbox. The "I" constitutes a horizon of haunting. I am haunted by all the "I's" I have been, all the "I's" I will become, and all the "I's" I could have been, could be, and could become. "I" as the *de facto* doer of Haunting Inquiry am already haunted by my choice of texts to read. I do not so much choose them as they choose me. Again, I do not so much apply Haunting Inquiry as it applies me. Moreover, when I make this claim, the process is already under way (in the haunting choices informing my writing of the present section of this concluding chapter). With an appreciation of this sliding character of Haunting Inquiry's subject, I shall continue with my discussion of "Applying Haunting Inquiry."

Haunting Inquiry suggests applicability for classroom teachers. In the first instance, I develop the framework to inform the use of classic NFB documentaries to support the curriculum. Haunting Inquiry is not a passivity-inducing methodology, presuming to do the work for the practitioner. Rather, it is an opening that requires active creativity to render it productive. Haunting Inquiry requires processes of recognition and articulation. I offer below a few suggested questions for the practitioner to ask in order to guide the process:

1. What is the overt curricular value of the film? In what way does it support and serve the curriculum I wish to teach?
2. What troubling aspect haunts the film? What makes me uncomfortable? What seems inappropriate or anachronistic?
3. How is this haunting implicated in history, culture, or politics? For example, are all the people represented in the film white or male? How can I use this observation as a teaching opportunity?
4. Why do I as a teacher feel haunted by this aspect of the film? (Or, indeed, if I find nothing haunting about the film, if I find it completely satisfying, why?)
5. How do my students report feeling haunted by the film?

I conceive Haunting Inquiry as not just-another-job to ask teachers to undertake. I appreciate the bind K-12 educators find themselves in the face of ever spiraling expectations. Rather, I see Haunting Inquiry as a framework for personal curricular appreciation. As I shared in Chapter 10, my great grandfather was a man who held high esteem for education. He accorded schooling the kind of privileged status most readily given from the "outside." He had farmed all his life and had achieved a Grade 3 education—about average for his time, place, and circumstances. He had a saying: "The thing about education is it's not heavy to carry around with you!" The sentiment conveys how I see Haunting Inquiry as a framework teachers can take up. I see it as something that can provide rich curricular insights but that is something not heavy to carry around with you. By opening haunting horizons of the curriculum, by destabilizing it, one can really hear it "speak" in new ways. It can provide a means, after Derrida (1994), to learn to live with ghosts.

Learning to live with ghosts also speaks to Haunting Inquiry's applicability for curriculum scholars. Scholarship should bring value to the communities it serves. I do not mean value in the calculus of neoliberal/entrepreneurial/ideological conceptions of education. I mean "value" in a way that can help make things better. I offer yet another negative definition of what I am trying to convey: I do not mean "better" in an ontologically determinate, teleological way. I mean "better" in the way of a hauntingly hopeful Otherwise. This is precisely the type of value that Haunting Inquiry opens toward in exploring fruitfully a range of "Academic" interests and concerns. Haunting Inquiry offers a language to interrogate the elusive qualities of subjectivity, text, and curriculum. To learn to live with ghosts does not mean learning to live with them in a sense of acquiescence, which implies a "looking the other way." Learning to live with ghosts as an ethical scholarly insight implies "looking the other way" in the sense of looking otherwise, attending to the Otherwise.

Perhaps one of the greatest promises of curriculum scholarship lies in its possibility for public intervention. This possibility exists virtually no matter what the paradigm employed. I take up this call with an idea of what I call "the curriculum of just walking around." We can inspire change one small bit at a time by endeavoring to be the kind of person who embodies the promise of our ideas. I endeavor to do so as I walk through life. Ghosts walk too. Of course, they walk in their own way, but their contribution can be just as inspiring. Even though they are not ontological but hauntological, even though their feet do not touch the ground, they still leave footprints. In addition, the films for which I have developed Haunting Inquiry are public texts. They are resources of the civic curriculum, which haunts with Grierson's vision for the NFB.



Haunting Inquiry supports understanding of the films and colours their contribution to public understanding with nuance, richness, and ethical sensitivity.

### **In Opening...**

I offer Haunting Inquiry as a linguistic conceptual framework for meeting the Other in classic National Film Board of Canada documentaries and the curriculum. The films have both positive curricular value and troublingly haunting aspects. Haunting Inquiry provides a framework to mobilize both of these implications. Haunting Inquiry does not presume to close down possibilities for meaning in either unreflective conservatism or determinate critique. Rather, it hopes to open toward the ever elusive Otherwise. Thus, I name the present closing-without-closing an "opening." I hope to open toward the big picture, the little picture, the unpictured. Haunting Inquiry opens toward the ellipticality of the curricular Otherwise. Haunting Inquiry is a linguistic conceptual framework for meeting the Other in classic National Film Board of Canada documentaries and the curriculum ...

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